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ART EPOCHS AND THEIR LEADERS

ART EPOCHS AND THEIR LEADERS

A SURVEY OF THE GENESIS OF MODERN ART

BY

OSCAR HAGEN

PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY AND CRITICISM OF ART
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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PREFACE

This book is intended for those lovers of art who expect of a work on art-history something more than a few helpful and illuminating biographical facts, and some more or less subjective phrases as to whether a given picture is good or bad. What I wished to point out, as concisely as possible, is the genesis of the painting of our day, which often seems so full of contradictions, the roads it has followed through the various epochs from 1400 A. D. down to the beginning of the twentieth century, why it developed thus and not otherwise, and what the great leading personalities have meant for the art of their own time as well as for that of the future. I have placed the chief emphasis upon the treatment of modern art and its complex problems, but in so doing I have steadily attempted to trace the lines of progress, which are interwoven with its fabric in such a multitude of ways, through the preceding stages of its evolution. It is my firm conviction that modern painting can only be understood as an outgrowth of the past. A history of modern art can therefore be really fruitful only if it shows the why and wherefore of that growth.

The book itself has grown out of a series of public lectures which I delivered during the winter of 1925–26 at the following colleges and universities: California, Columbia, Cornell, Goucher, Harvard, Illinois, Kansas, Leland Stanford, Milwaukee-Downer, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Smith, Wisconsin, and Yale; also in the Art Institute of Milwaukee and the Art Museum of St. Louis. When I say that the book has *grown out* of these lectures, I do not mean to imply that it was merely a

question of printing the lectures themselves. I trust that such an erroneous conception, which would be disastrous to the judgment of the book, might be dispelled at the outset solely by the highly condensed form which was my aim in every part of it, and in which I have attempted, in accordance with one unifying idea, to find and to set forth the inner basis for ideas of historical development that could in the nature of things only be touched upon superficially in isolated and more or less popular one-hour talks.

The method which I have pursued is based upon a careful analysis of the art-works which embody the development; an analysis which in each and every case proceeds from the formal artistic problems of the age in question. The illustrations have been chosen in such a way that the reader can follow with his own eyes the development traced in my discussion.

And yet a mere study of the formal development would not have been sufficient, if one wishes a complete understanding of the historical record. It is therefore at the same time one of the essential aims of these pages to point out the connection existing between the spirit of the various epochs, or at least its clearest reflection, their civilization, on the one hand, and the modes of artistic expression which dominated in the various epochs, on the other. In this connection it is also important to remark that the spiritual points of view —*i. e.*, the main trends in civilization—have not developed down through the centuries as something independent, but always in complete harmony with the prevailing modes in art.

To pursue so comprehensive a subject quite exhaustively into its ultimate ramifications—that end, to be sure, could scarcely have been attained by several volumes of the compass of this one. With a view to fixing

my readers' attention on the actual events, I have preferred to restrict myself to those chapters in the history of European art which I regard as the absolutely essential ones. For this book should really be read as a whole from cover to cover; it is not a work of reference; it is meant to be taken as a unit, just as its purpose is to demonstrate the unity beneath the manifold historical mutations of artistic endeavor. One cannot understand the structure of a machine, either, by studying an isolated cog-wheel or a single piston; everything depends on the organism, on the interaction of the various parts.

To make clear the structure and the growth of this organism would have been impossible within the narrow limits of this book, if I had attempted: (1) to write a history of artists instead of a history of art; (2) to view the historical matter from all conceivable and possible standpoints.

As to the first point, the following may be said: The lofty task of writing history is not accomplished by the enumeration, with the greatest possible completeness, of the peoples, schools, and masters who participated in its development, whereupon they are loosely connected by literary, æsthetic, or moral comments on some of their master works. Leading art critics have shown by their example that the real matter of art-history is art itself, and biography merely a supplement, though an indispensable one. It is precisely due to this new conception that modern art-history, brief as its development is, has been finally admitted to the field of pure history on an equal footing with other well-established historical branches. This has recently led, as my readers may know, to a sort of "art-history without artists."

As to the second point, I adhere to the principle

without which none of the great admired standard works on world-history, the history of civilization, and of the intellectual life would be thinkable, namely that good history never aims at the presentation of *all* the imaginable aspects of its subject, but that it rather sees its ultimate goal in the task of comprehending the given matter from the standpoint of organic development, and of illuminating with maximal intensity only such forces and factors as might appear essential to the understanding of the development. Without the principle of selection no logical historical interpretation is conceivable.

This confession, I hope, will blunt the edge of an objection that one might possibly make upon a cursory examination of my book, namely that I had restricted myself to a choice of too few leading masters. How gladly would I have written more about Titian! How great was my desire to add a separate chapter each on Correggio, Mathias Grünewald, El Greco, Velazquez, Rubens! But it soon became clear to me that this would not only overburden the book, but above all that the mapping out of the paths of development that converge upon the painting of the nineteenth century would have been seriously deprived of clarity. My twofold aim, to present a history of art and not of artists, and to attain clarity of historical delineation, will also explain why I have treated the *Quattrocento*, so rich in names, almost as if it were an age of anonymity.

The art of Europe, upon whose shoulders, in the last analysis, rests the present-day art of America, is indeed a complex organism, but also a product of uncommonly logical growth. Its two most important constituents are on the one hand its epochs, and on the other hand its racial groups. The most interesting point of intersection with respect to the racial problems in the his-

tory of art is that point in the sixteenth century where the Latin and the Gothic mode of seeing collide, and the differences between them have to be settled. The most pronounced break in the succession of the epochs lies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the development, which up to that time had gone forward without interruption, was suddenly and violently broken off by the great French Revolution, and art begins again from the very beginning, until in one mighty rush, after it has previously repeated once more all the foregoing style-phases, it culminates in Impressionism.

On the basis of what I consider to have been essentially the historical constituents, my book divides of itself into six chapters. The fifteenth century, bringing as it does not only the break with the Middle Ages but also a type of painting which is built up on the new discovery of reality, and which created foundations for painting which are valid down to the present day, forms the beginning of the book, gives the exposition, so to speak. With regard to the sixteenth century, whose most essential problem was the settlement of the dispute between Gothic and Renaissance, it was necessary to treat the Latin and the Gothic branch each in a separate chapter. Since, moreover, from now on the personal leadership of individuals begins to play a more important part in the development, the twin-problem of Renaissance and Gothic had to be displayed in the two more prominent representatives of their age and their respective nations—in Michelangelo and Dürer. The fourth chapter treats of the seventeenth century, represented by Rembrandt, that artist in whose personality and in whose art the complex spirit of the Baroque met with its most many-sided reflection. The two last chapters deal with the growth and essence of modern painting, as seen in France; the break with the past, and the

renewed upbuilding in chapter five, and the epitomizing of all preceding efforts in that style which was the really representative international style of the nineteenth century—impressionism—in chapter six. The artistic synthesis which followed upon Impressionism—itself essentially analytical—and which underlies the style of our present-day art: the art of Cézanne, the leader of the Latins, and the art of van Gogh, the leader of the "Gothic" racial groups—this synthesis forms the logical close of the book.

I do not conceal from myself the fact that both the trend of thought and the method of this book represent something new in the relatively young art-literature of America. It follows from this that the literary presentation of my subject was by no means an easy matter. To be able to express myself quite concisely, a wholly new terminology had to be devised at many points. If the book, despite these difficulties, has been rendered agreeably readable, as I confidently hope it has, this result is due above all else to the collaboration of my friend Professor B. Q. Morgan, of the University of Wisconsin, who has unweariedly devoted to this cause his oft-tested literary discrimination, and who has been my constant counsellor from start to finish in the verbal phrasing of the entire work. To express to him herewith my heartfelt gratitude affords me a very great satisfaction.

Oscar Hagen.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Discovery of Reality	1
II.	Michelangelo	65
III.	Dürer and the Gothic Age	120
IV.	Rembrandt	178
V.	Art and Revolution	231
VI.	The Climax	272
	Index	319

ILLUSTRATIONS

NO.		PAGE
1.	ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO. Portraits of famous men and women, from Villa Legnaia, *ca.* 1440, Florence, Castagno Museum	17
2.	ANDREA MANTEGNA. The family of Ludovico Gonzaga, *ca.* 1470, Mantova, Castello Sforzesco	19
3.	RAPHAEL. The School of Athens, 1509, Rome, Vatican	21
4.	RAPHAEL. Portrait of Francesco Maria della Rovere. Detail from "The School of Athens," 1509, Rome, Vatican	23
5.	PIERO DEI FRANCESCHI. Sigismondo Malatesta Kneeling before St. Sigismund, 1451, Rimini, San Francesco	26
6.	GHIRLANDAJO. Zachariah and the Angel, 1490, Florence, Santa Maria Novella	29
7.	GIOTTO. Judas Betrays Christ, 1305, Padua, Scrovegni Chapel	39
8.	MASACCIO. The Tribute Money, 1425, Florence, Santa Maria del Carmine, Brancacci Chapel	40
9.	MASACCIO. Holy Trinity, Saints, and Donors, 1427, Florence, Santa Maria Novella	41
10.	MANTEGNA. Centre of painted ceiling of the Bridal Chamber, *ca.* 1470, Mantua, Castello Sforzesco	43
11.	MELOZZO DA FORLI. Section from painted vaults of the Capella della Tesoreria in Loreto Cathedral, 1478	44
12.	MELOZZO DA FORLI. Fragment of painted vault of Choir of Santi Apostoli, 1481, Rome, Quirinal	45

NO. PAGE

13. CORREGGIO. Assumption of Virgin, Dome of Parma Cathedral, 1530 47

14. TITIAN. Pietà, 1573–1576, Venice, Accademia di belle arti 54

15. TITIAN. Detail of Pietà, Venice, Accademia di belle arti 55

16. TITIAN. Detail of Pietà, Venice, Accademia di belle arti 55

17. BENOZZO GOZZOLI. The Shame of Noah, *ca.* 1460, Pisa, Campo Santo 81

18. MICHELANGELO. The Shame of Noah, 1508, Rome, Ceiling of Sistine Chapel 82

19. BENEDETTO DA MAIANO. Virgin and Child. Terra-cotta, *ca.* 1480, Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum . . 86

20. MICHELANGELO. The Madonna of Bruges, *ca.* 1500, Bruges, St. Mary's Church 86

21. MICHELANGELO. Medici Madonna, *ca.* 1520, Florence, San Lorenzo, Sagrestia nuova 87

22. MICHELANGELO. David, 1503, Florence, Accademia delle belle arti 89

23. MICHELANGELO. St. Matthew, 1504, Florence, Accademia delle belle arti 91

24. MICHELANGELO. Slave, *ca.* 1515, Paris, Louvre . . 91

25. MICHELANGELO. The Division of Light and Darkness, and four Nudes, 1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel . . 95

26. MICHELANGELO. Nude, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 96

27. MICHELANGELO. Nude, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 97

NO. PAGE

28. FILIPPINO LIPPI. The Delphic Sibyl, 1489, Rome, Ceiling of Caraffa Chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva 99

29. MICHELANGELO. The Delphic Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 101

30. MICHELANGELO. The Persian Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 102

31. MICHELANGELO. The Cumæan Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 103

32. MICHELANGELO. The Libyan Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 105

33. MICHELANGELO. The Prophet Isaiah, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 107

34. MICHELANGELO. The Prophet Jonah, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 108

35. MICHELANGELO. The Prophet Jeremiah, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel 110

36. MICHELANGELO. Tomb of Giuliano dei Medici, with the figures of Day and Night, 1521–1534, Florence, San Lorenzo, Sagrestia nuova 113

37. MICHELANGELO. Tomb of Lorenzo dei Medici, with the figures of Dawn and Twilight, 1521–1534, Florence 114

38. MICHELANGELO. Prigioniero, 1518–1522, Florence, Accademia di belle arti 117

39. MICHELANGELO. Prigioniero, 1518–1522, Florence, Accademia di belle arti 117

40. Interior of St. Lorenzo's Church, Florence 122

41. Interior of the Cologne Cathedral 124

42. Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan 128

43. The Apostle's Church, Cologne 129

NO. PAGE

44. Florence, Palazzo Vecchio 130

45. The Cathedral of Limburg on the Lahn 131

46. Hildesheim, Germany: the City Hall 132

47. Rothenburg on the Tauber; view over the city walls . . 133

48. Carved altar-piece by Veit Stoss (wings half shut), 1489, Cracow, St. Mary's Church 137

49. Carved altar-piece by Veit Stoss (wings opened), 1489, Cracow, St. Mary's Church 139

50. Mary of the Annunciation (viewed from two sides), by an anonymous master of the Tyrol, *ca.* 1400, Wiesbaden, Germany, private collection 142

51. The Tree of Jesse. Fragment of a carved altar-piece, 1520, Kalkar, Germany 144

52. ALBRECHT DÜRER. The Four Riders of the Apocalypse, woodcut, 1497 149

53. MARTIN SCHONGAUER. Flight into Egypt, engraving, *ca.* 1470 151

54. ALBRECHT DÜRER. Flight into Egypt, woodcut, *ca.* 1504 153

55. ALBRECHT DÜRER. Jerome in His Cell, engraving, 1514 155

56. ALBRECHT DÜRER. Melancolia, engraving, 1514 . 157

57. HANS BALDUNG. Witches, woodcut, printed from two blocks 165

58. ALBRECHT ALTDORFER. The Forest Dweller, pen-and-ink drawing, Prague Museum 169

59. LUCAS CRANACH. Repose in Egypt, 1504, Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum 171

60. HANS BALDUNG. Repose in Egypt, 1512, Nürnberg, Germanic Museum 173

NO. PAGE

61. ALBRECHT ALTDORFER. St. George Fighting the Dragon, 1510, Munich, Old Pinakothek 176

62. REMBRANDT. The Night Watch, 1642, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 191

63. REMBRANDT. The Golfers, etching, 1654 194

64. CARAVAGGIO. Peter Denies the Lord, etching, 1603 195

65. REMBRANDT. Men Bathing, etching, 1651 . . . 196

66. REMBRANDT. Twelfth Night, etching, *ca.* 1652 . . 199

67. REMBRANDT. The Three Crosses, etching, final state, *ca.* 1655 200

68. HANS HOLBEIN, JR. Portrait of the Merchant Gisze, 1532, Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum 204

69. REMBRANDT. Portrait of Nicolaes Bruyningh, 1652, Cassel, Picture Gallery 205

70. REMBRANDT. Portrait of the Artist's Mother, 1637, Vienna, State Gallery 212

71. REMBRANDT. Portrait of Elisabeth de Leeuwen, sister-in-law of the artist, *ca.* 1650, Paris, Jules Porgès Collection 213

72. REMBRANDT. The Supper at Emmaus, 1627, Paris, André-Jaquemart Collection 215

73. REMBRANDT. The Supper at Emmaus, 1648, Paris, Louvre 216

74. REMBRANDT. The Supper at Emmaus, 1661, Paris, Louvre 219

75. REMBRANDT. The Good Samaritan, etching, 1633 . 220

76. REMBRANDT. The Good Samaritan, 1648, Paris, Louvre 222

77. REMBRANDT. The Thunderstorm, 1638, Braunschweig, Picture Gallery 224

NO. PAGE

78. REMBRANDT. Landscape with Three Trees, etching, 1643 225

79. REMBRANDT. The Windmill, 1650, Philadelphia, Widener Collection 226

80. REMBRANDT. Landscape with Swans, etching, 1650 228

81. REMBRANDT. Self-portrait, 1669, Munich, Old Pinakothek, Carstanjen Collection 229

82. ANDREA DEL POZZO. St. Ignatius Carried into Paradise, *ca.* 1685, Rome, Painted Vault of St. Ignazio . 237

83. GREUZE. The Village Bride, 1761, Paris, Louvre . . 241

84. ANTOINE WATTEAU. The Island of Cÿthera, 1717, Berlin, Royal Palace 248

85. J. L. DAVID. The Oath of the Horatii, 1784, Paris, Louvre 250

86. J. L. DAVID. Marat Murdered, 1793, Paris, Louvre . 252

87. INGRES. The Vow of Louis XIII, 1824, Montauban Cathedral 255

88. THÉODORE GÉRICAULT. Horse Race at Epsom, 1825, Paris, Louvre 257

89. THÉODORE GÉRICAULT. The Raft of the Medusa, 1816, Paris, Louvre 258

90. EUGÈNE DELACROIX. The Barge of Don Juan, 1840, Paris, Louvre 259

91. EUGÈNE DELACROIX. Liberty on the Barricades, 1830, Paris, Louvre 262

92. CAMILLE COROT. The Steep Road, Paris, Louvre . 265

93. JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET. The Gleaners, 1856, Paris, Louvre 267

94. JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET. Angelus, Paris, Louvre . 268

95. HONORÉ DAUMIER. The Washwoman 269

NO. PAGE

96. FRANCISCO GOYA. Shooting of the Rebels of May 3, 1808, Madrid 286

97. ÉDOUARD MANET. Shooting of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico 287

98. ÉDOUARD MANET. La Rue de Berne, Paris . . . 289

99. CLAUDE MONET. A Summer Day 291

100. ÉDOUARD MANET. Horse Race at Longchamps . 293

101. EDGAR DEGAS. Portrait of Vicomte Lapic on the Place de la Concorde, 1874, Paris 296

102. EDGAR DEGAS. La Chansonette, 1875, lithograph . 297

103. PAUL SIGNAC. Pennoned Sailboats 298

104. AUGUSTE RENOIR. Chestnut-Trees in Bloom . . 299

105. VINCENT VAN GOGH. Cypresses, *ca.* 1890 . . . 301

106. VINCENT VAN GOGH. Starry Night and Cypresses, *ca.* 1889 307

107. PAUL CÉZANNE. Country Road, *ca.* 1880, Hamburg, T. Behrens collection 308

108. PAUL CÉZANNE. La Maison du Pendu, *ca.* 1885, Paris, Vollard collection 310

109. VINCENT VAN GOGH. Ferme près d'Auvers, 1890 . 311

110. PAUL CÉZANNE. Self-portrait 312

111. VINCENT VAN GOGH. Portrait of Dr. Gachet, 1890, Frankfort, Städel Gallery 313

112. PAUL CÉZANNE. Still Life with the Clock, *ca.* 1870, Budapest, Private collection 314

113. VINCENT VAN GOGH. Prison Yard, 1887, Moscow, Morosoff collection 316

ART EPOCHS AND THEIR LEADERS

CHAPTER I

THE DISCOVERY OF REALITY

I

The catchword "Renaissance," which it is still the fashion to employ after the manner of Giorgio Vasari, the "father of art-history," ought to be permanently abandoned as a caption for chapters on the Italian painters who worked from about 1350 to 1550. This designation is fundamentally misleading, for it evaluates (or really depreciates) the artistic achievement of those incomparably magnificent forerunners of modern painting by assigning to that art, as its most essential feature, its derivation from something in the far-distant past, whereas its most peculiar and characteristic trait—fresh and direct observation of reality—is left out of consideration. But captions, especially in a historical work, ought to strive for precision above all else. So if that great period of art must have some sort of a caption, then a mere delimitation of its time, without the inclusion of any evaluation, is rather to be recommended; as indeed the Italians have long since perceived, for they simply speak of the *Quattrocento* and the *Cinquecento*. At the very least, however, the word Renaissance should no longer be understood in the sense that the original coiner of the term, Vasari, wished to have assigned to it: the rebirth of antiquity in art.

With respect to the general culture of that period, to be sure, we would not deny for a moment the tre-

mendous influence of classical antiquity. No one has proven the power of that influence more incisively and convincingly than Jakob Burckhardt in his *Civilization of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*. As regards not only the general civilization of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but also their literature and philosophy, we must indeed recognize a consciously desired—and attained—"rebirth of antiquity." The classical ideal represented a cultural programme of whose realization men were very proud. But to theorize about a dependence of the then developing *painting* upon classical models as if it operated in the same manner would imply being blunted and blinded to the originality and in the deepest sense creativeness of the new art about and after 1400.

Even Burckhardt demanded—and that with regard to the literature of that period, where after all conditions are quite different from those of painting—a strict and clean demarcation between the purely externalizing style and manner of expression, on the one hand (*e. g.*, the literary style of Cicero, which to be sure had been diligently imitated), and the absolutely original power of realistic observation, on the other hand, which was derivative from no model, but was simply inborn in the Italians of the fifteenth century. We may well trace the literary style of a Filippo Villani—who wrote at the end of the fourteenth century his character-studies of famous Florentines (*Vite di illustri Fiorentini*), brilliant as with a thousand polished facets—to the influence of certain Roman biographers, such as Plutarch; but the special gift of observation, whereby he managed to hold fast each character in all its peculiar oddities, is simply not to be derived from any existing model.

In other words: the type of description may be a renascence of classic examples; but the power of perception is and remains an offshoot of the new generation and of the Italian people. So too the new art of painting owes everything to this gift.

After all, from what ancient paintings could this new school have been derived? Were there *any* classical sources at all? Compilers of biographies, orators, historians, or philosophers of that day did indeed possess well-preserved models: the ancient writings. In fifteenth-century Florence there were authorities on Latin style who did not employ one word, one turn of phrase, for which they could not cite a parallel from the original writings of Cicero, the most revered of all the classic writers. But of classical painting they had at best a vague and purely literary conception, derived from the descriptions of Vitruvius or Pliny. Pompeii and Herculaneum still lay buried in ashes. Even the paintings—illuminating after all only in decorative respects—in the "Golden House of Nero" at Rome (the so-called "Grottos" or "Baths of Titus"), which were so interesting to the *Cinquecento* later on, were not revealed until toward the end of the fifteenth century.

Of the arts which blossomed afresh at this time, architecture doubtless derived the greatest advantage from antiquity. But architecture does not occupy itself with that which seemed of prime importance to the painting of that period: the representation of Nature. In this task, painting was joined only by its sister art, sculpture. The latter indeed did find models: though by no means the truly classic ones of the Greeks, from which we have formed our present-day conception of ancient art. Of the Greek originals of the great pre-

Christian centuries absolutely nothing was known in Italy. And as to the standard output of Roman times, even those works were still buried in rubbish, throughout the early period of modern art, which we should like to have brought into connection with that epoch: the Apollo Belvedere, the Laokoön group, Niobe and her children. By far the major part of the works of classical sculpture which could fire the imagination of young sculptors, up to the middle of the fifteenth century, were reliefs on sarcophagi and small statuary, particularly dating from the "inferior" period of the third and fourth centuries A. D., which was one of decadence. Moreover, these sculptural products were the only heritage of antiquity to which painting—in the complete absence of pictorial sources—could have turned for guidance. This was indeed done as far as possible, and it permits of no doubt that the various types of studies and drawings made, for example, after the nude figures on such reliefs shortened the course of the future development considerably. By taking the roundabout road through late-antique sculpture, artists learned to understand the human body and its proportions more rapidly than their contemporaries in the Netherlands, for instance, who lacked completely such an artistic heritage.

But now that we have pointed out this working from ancient sculptures, have we then explained anything essential in the tremendous development of this young school of painting around 1400? No. And even if the treasures of ancient sculpture had been ten times as numerous, how could their white marble smoothness or their lack of spatial relations have been able to contribute anything at all to the attainment of that which

must be regarded as the really great achievement of the new painting: the penetration and representation of three-dimensional space on the two-dimensional surface of the flat picture; the representation of atmospheric light by means of color; the vividly flowing narration of really experienced happenings upon a concretely tangible stage, filled with the blue of the sky, the green of field and forest, and the gay glory of manifold edifices? Not the echo of old forms and traditions, no: the fresh youthful joy in vision and the capacity for it, a feeling for the reality of the universe and for Nature that suddenly bursts out like a well-spring . . . that is what makes the importance of this new painting. Moreover, it is precisely this urge to achieve the representation of Nature in her great connections, this "will to space," so to speak, that is in its deepest bases un-Greek. This entire school of painting would be thinkable, just as it is, even if there had never been any Greek art.

For a similarly constituted naturalism developed at the same period in the Netherlands from the very antithesis of classical art, the Gothic. Not the rebirth of antiquity, but *the birth of Nature in art;* such might be a proper caption for this epoch.

II

Emile Zola once said that painting was "a bit of Nature viewed through a temperament." This definition applies to the painting of the last five hundred years; it would be impossible to apply it to mediæval painting. For neither could Nature, the factual existence of the external world, signify anything for the art

of an age whose deepest conviction was that all mundane phenomena are but a perplexing and valueless illusion; nor could mediæval painting, bound up as it was with strictly iconographic systems, have done anything with the individual temperament. The concept "temperament," which Zola introduces in his definition, presupposes as obvious something that had slumbered throughout the entire Middle Ages, and that had only come to life again with the new cultural dawn of the Renaissance: namely, the personal, spiritual expression of an individual, of a personality.

The awakening of the personality, or, more accurately expressed, the dawning consciousness of dormant personal creative powers and personal prerogatives in the individual, is perhaps the most fundamental and novel feature of the Renaissance. Without such a prerequisite, at any rate, the "age of discoveries" would be unthinkable. The adventurous quest for distant lands was shared by the men of the Middle Ages; the Crusades had aroused it, world-commerce had powerfully fostered it. Had it been only a matter of *wanderlust*, some Columbus might have accidentally discovered America in the twelfth or thirteenth century. But it is one thing to be accidentally cast upon some shore, and another to find what you have sought—and to seek it where you were sure you would find it. The noteworthy feature of Columbus's achievement is precisely that he was not accidentally driven upon a western coast, but that he found the land, unknown but assumed by him to exist, because he had consciously steered for it. Columbus had trusted his sound judgment. And it is the Renaissance in him that enabled him to say to himself: My own understanding possesses the power to envisage

something that my eye cannot yet see. But even though I cannot see it, it exists: I can figure out that it exists, just as certainly as I can calculate an unknown quantity from two that are known. Even this method would have been inconceivable to the mediæval mind. For the Middle Ages were unaware of the possibility of determining the actuality of an unknown by the power of reason. The discovery of this creative power of the understanding was in itself perhaps the very greatest discovery of the new age. On this discovery (and on all that derives from it) our whole philosophy is based; it accounts for Galileo, Copernicus, Kant, and Einstein.

This rise of the individual, with which the Renaissance opened, has at times been confused with a totally different matter, namely with the statement that the concept of "personality" had only been born with the Renaissance. What an error! As if the Middle Ages had known no outstanding, self-determining personalities! What should we do, under such an erroneous view, with Charlemagne, Gregory the Great, Francis of Assisi? Without the existence of great human energy-clusters, which thrust forward the wheel of time with mighty hand, there would be neither development nor history. Rather is the opposite saying true: None of those powerful mediæval emperors, popes, or founders of religion would have presumed to lift the prevailing dogmatic philosophy off its hinges on the basis of personal empirical criticism, as for example Leonardo da Vinci did when he wrote (fifty years before the publication of the cosmology of Copernicus) the brief statement in his diary: "The sun does not move," or when he determined (a century before Harvey) the circulation of the blood in man.

"Knowledge" throughout the entire Middle Ages had meant: blind faith in the authority of dogma; "learning" meant the mastery of dogma. The new generation that grew up after 1400 established the empirical principle: the acquisition of knowledge came to mean a deliberate scepticism as to the teachings of others until they were proven to be true. But that which men searched into was the world of actual things, what they saw with their eyes. And the force with which they penetrated into that reality was unprejudiced observation.

That men who had thus discovered themselves soon acquired a hitherto undreamed-of interest in their fellow men was but natural. And so the individual himself now becomes the object of observation and research. Biographies spring up after 1400 like mushrooms, literary portraits of contemporaries in which every external feature, and so far as possible also the psychological element, is studied in detail and described with great gusto. Lust of fame and a craving for popularity frequently act as motive force in this, both for the writer and for his subject. Men write about each other. Leonardo da Vinci writes out in his note-books an allegory of Fame, which he imagines as a bird that is thickly covered not with feathers, but with human tongues. Such an allegory would have found no understanding two hundred years earlier. Of what value was fame, or indeed the life of any man, in the Middle Ages? No one in that day thought of biographies such as the Renaissance was to produce, although the writings of Plutarch, Suetonius, and Nepos were as eagerly studied then as later. It did not occur to the Middle Ages to imitate such works. Why should it? The earthly life

of a sinner, they thought, was of no importance anyway, for one man was as good or bad as another. It was equality that counted here below, not diversity. If a man had lived a godly life on earth, had been snatched by death out of this pseudo-world of delusion, and had finally been sainted, then and only then was his life worth setting forth in legendary form. But even these legends of the saints, the only biographies written in the Middle Ages, studiously avoided all analysis of the individual character. Only the universally valid, the non-particular gained consideration, and everything individual, all the traits that had distinguished such a man from the average of his environment, was carefully concealed in the conventional folds of the saintly robes.

Hence we of to-day still lack an answer to the question: who were the thousands of great sculptors who adorned the portals and façades of the mediæval cathedrals with myriads of incomparable sculptures? Do we know their names? Each of them was surely a master, perhaps more worthy of fame than many a man of whom the biography-loving *Quattrocento* has most readily bequeathed us a record. Like all their mediæval contemporaries, these thousands dropped out of sight in the vast ocean of anonymity. And very likely those forgotten mediæval artists themselves had not yet felt a trace of that craving without which no modern artist can be imagined: the craving to be famous and to be elevated by the veneration of contemporaries and posterity as it were upon a royal throne. How absolutely and completely is this situation changed in the fourteenth century, and still more so in the fifteenth. For that matter, we already have in Dante's *Divina Com-*

media an infinitude of unforgetable individual portraits. In the stories of Boccaccio, in the cornucopia of Ghiberti's *memorabilia* . . . what a wealth of tangible, vivid character-studies springs out upon us. The peculiarities of the individual are brought out, anecdotes illuminate the oddities of the great. With two or three impressionistic strokes Ghiberti presents Brunellesco, the great Florentine sculptor, to our eyes: "When he heard unjust reproaches, he would ask without malice: Brother, do you understand these matters? On the other hand, he would accept words of praise about as the lad who cleans your shoes pockets his fee." Whoever is depicted by the biographers of that day stands before us in his full stature and wears his own nose.

Then men begin to collect the letters of important persons. Partly because they take pleasure in having people document their own lives, partly with the avowed intention of assembling historical source-material. It was on the basis of extensive sources that Vasari wrote in 1550 his *Lives of the Famous Architects, Sculptors, and Painters*, the first comprehensive history of Italian art, and besides that an incomparably colorful biographical work, to whose pregnant character-drawings alone we owe it that the great and small figures of the Renaissance seem to live among us to-day not as dead names, but as living persons, endowed alike with faults and virtues. Then comes autobiography. And so naturally and obviously does the individual enter upon the scene in the sixteenth century that a Benvenuto Cellini considers *a priori* every single happening of his life (or what he is pleased to set forth as such) as not only worthy of, but indeed indispensable

to, the most exhaustive literary treatment. Cellini is already reckoning with a public—not unlike that of the present—that will listen, merely because the writer is a celebrated artist, with equal interest to every statement he makes, whether it concern a fist-fight or an unpaid tailor's bill.

But if we seek the perfect type of the great individualists of the Renaissance, we must look at Pope Julius II (1503–13). What care he took, first and foremost, that his name might never sink in the waters of Lethe. Even Boniface VIII (1294–1303) had caused statues with his likeness to be erected on and in the churches of the land. At that time this unexampled action had been so little understood that the king of France accused the pope of restoring idolatry. Now, two hundred years later, in the free era of individualism, no pope needed any longer to fear such reproaches. Unhesitatingly Julius could venture to inaugurate a plan which bore the greatest resemblance to the self-deification of certain Roman emperors. A new Rome was to rise upon the ruins of the old, having at its centre St. Peter's, the hugest church on earth: not to the honor of God, but of Julius. For the new cathedral was to become only the brilliant repository of his imperishable tomb, created by Michelangelo, and thereby the eternal renewal of his earthly glory. For this purpose and no other did the pope harness, one after another, the artists of that day to his triumphal chariot: Michelangelo, Bramante, Raphael, San Gallo. They had but one task: to glorify him, the unique one, the pope who was living his life according to his own ideas, him, Julius of the Rovere family.

We are now acquainted with the creative power of

the new epoch. Let us next turn to the material on which it tested that power. There was but one: the world of things, as it is and as it appears to the eye. Reality. If we emerge from the Middle Ages into the new epoch, we feel as if some mystic hand had snatched with one jerk the spectacles of scholastic philosophy from the eyes of those men, so that their undistorted gaze could all at once look deeply into reality without prejudice and without any abstraction. The Italian feeling for reality freed itself in the fourteenth century with almost uncanny self-assurance from the old modes of seeing. One is again and again astounded to see how many of the methods of examining and describing reality that are common property to-day were then employed for the first time and immediately developed to a high degree of perfection. Maps and descriptions of the world, even statistical compilations, were newly created. Back in the thirteenth century, Brunetto Latini, Dante's friend, had made use of a comparative method: he compared the French way of living with that of the Italians, and took occasion at the same time to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the monarchic form of government, as it prevailed in France, with those of the Italian Republics. Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini) presented in his "Cosmography," about the middle of the fifteenth century, in addition to a highly vivid description of the countries he had traversed, the manners and customs of their inhabitants, their industries, and statistics of their products. It is clear even from these few examples that the new realism did not restrict itself to formulas and a few selected things, but endeavored to proceed as diversely and comprehensively as possible. Indeed, this diversification—motley variety is in gen-

eral characteristic of the fifteenth century—is a distinctive feature of this truly youthful epoch of the observation of actuality. Later, in the sixteenth century, people have become much more fastidious and view things onesidedly and with a certain bias, whether this be based on æsthetic, philosophical, or other considerations. Such an all-embracing intellect as Leonardo, for whom everything in the world was equally important and fascinating, would have been a little out of his element in the later part of the sixteenth century, when scientists, philosophers, and artists were all to a certain extent specialists in their particular branches. Leonardo was a master, one may safely say, of the entire knowledge and skill of his age, to such a degree that no contemporary specialist even remotely equalled him. If we call him a painter to-day, we name perhaps the very aptitude to which he himself attached the least importance. He was a physicist, mathematician, geologist, zoologist, botanist, astronomer, builder of fortifications and bridges, designer of flying-machines and implements of war, Alpine climber, the inventor of a submarine aural detector (similar to the modern device), physician and anatomist, festival director, poet, architect, sculptor, painter, musician, athlete, riding expert . . . and I am sure that in this enumeration there are many omissions.

The marked fondness for collecting in that time is a further testimonial to the multiform pleasure with which the men of the *Quattrocento* sought to encompass the world in all its phenomena. Each and every object was collected, provided only that it represented reality in some way. Of course plants and animals too. In fact, as regards the latter, it must actually be said that

the menagerie for which Ippolito Medici, for example, had laid down a comprehensive plan was more complete than zoological gardens of our day are generally wont to be, for he had represented there, in addition to the various kinds of animals, also the rarer races of men. Ippolito was very proud of possessing a group of barbarians, who not only afforded humorous opportunities for comparing the apes and primitive types of the genus *homo sapiens*, but who were also rendered interesting by the fact that they talked twenty different tongues which nobody but themselves understood.

III

For the new school of painting—to consider now our narrower subject—the concept Reality is identical with that of Nature. Never has the relation of any people to natural life been less clouded, fresher, and more creative, than that of the Italians of the early Renaissance. The type of picture by means of which the feeling for reality and above all its rapid development can be most convincingly demonstrated is of course the portrait. To be able to preserve the features of a person after death in a chiselled or painted image, making him immortal, as it were, could not but seem to be the greatest triumph of art to an age that bestowed its entire affection upon the individual character and esteemed lasting fame above all else. "Painting holds within it a truly divine power; for it doth not only achieve, like to friendship, that distant persons are very present to us, but yet more, namely, that after many centuries the Dead still seem to live." In these words of Leone Battista Alberti[1] speaks the veritable

[1] *Trattato della pittura*, libro II.

exultation of the early fifteenth century over the human portrait, risen to life again after almost a thousand years.

The significant rôle which the portrait had played in the art of Greece and Rome—we recall the hermæ of Greek statesmen and philosophers, the statues of the Olympian victors, the busts of the Roman emperors, and above all those weirdly veracious portrait-heads so executed as to strike us almost like impressionistic paintings, which were placed with the Egyptian mummies in Hellenistic times, and which we know as the death-heads of Fayum—this significant rôle had no longer been played by the portrait in the history of art after the age of Constantine the Great. First, its keenly observant naturalism had yielded to a more generalizing, conventionalizing tendency; then the new religion and philosophy of the early Middle Ages, averse as it was to all mundane things and hence to all individualizing, took a hostile attitude toward portraiture as an art-type. It did not take two further centuries until the portrait had vanished altogether. It does bloom afresh, indeed, in the life-size figures of mortuary sculpture, especially in the Romanesque and Gothic periods; but the thirteenth century had to come in before even the tomb-figures ceased to be merely conventional reproductions of the human being as such, representatives of the type, not of the individual.

But then in the fourteenth century, when the mediæval contempt of earthly existence had waned, there sets in almost overnight that long series of portraits in sculpture and painting in which, as in the vibrations of the seismograph, one can perceive the eruptions of a healthy realism, directed to the things of this world.

Side by side with the literary biographies, of which we have just spoken, the portrait celebrates its resurrection.

The common root of both phenomena is plain to see: pleasure in the destiny and character of the individual. It is characteristic that in this particular case the real impetus came by no means from works of classic art. Indeed, Italy was not even the birthplace of the new portraiture, but rather France, the home of Gothic art. There, where as nowhere else the growth of naturalism can be traced step by step during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in sculpture and miniature-painting, there—at the papal court in Avignon, at the court of the French kings and of the dukes of Burgundy and Berry—appear for the first time those characteristic quarter-length portraits, painted on little portable tablets, which showed the way in a purely formal sense to the entire portraiture of the future; the profile portrait of John the Good (1350–64) in the National Library at Paris may probably be regarded as the earliest known example of the new school of portraiture. The creative achievement of France, in this as in so many another phase of art-history at that time, reacted upon Italy. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Scaligeri in Verona, the Carrara in Padua, had the walls of their palaces decorated with the portraits of members of their families. As Ghiberti reports, Giotto painted for Robert of Naples the portraits of famous men (*uomini famosi*). And as soon as the fifteenth century came in, it was as if the painters' joy in the production of portraits no longer knew any bounds. Andrea del Castagno's generals and poets, once the wall-decorations of a hall in the Villa Legnaia, now in the Museo

1. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO

Portraits of famous men and women, from Villa Legnaia, ca. 1440, Florence, Castagno Museum.

di Santa Apollonia at Florence, continued the series of *Uomini famosi*, but now in the full splendor of the new style. In full figure, powerfully rounded off, these heroes advance with eloquent gestures toward the beholder from shallow niches, like frames, in the wall. It must have seemed to those who first set eyes upon these mystifying images as if this were terrifying reality, not painting. (1.)

Nevertheless, it was but the overture to far more astonishing manifestations of early realism. Not much later, the great Andrea Mantegna painted on one of the walls of the bridal chamber in the palace at Mantua the numerous family and the entire court of the margrave Ludovico Gonzaga. (2.) The most complete reproduction of daily life was his goal in this. It looks as if the flat wall were transformed into a terrace that extends far to the rear, to which one ascends on steps from the right. On the left side, the wind blows a curtain into the room. Family and courtiers are on the terrace. The margrave has just received an important letter. He turns rearward over the back of his armchair to his secretary, who has hurried forward with zealous officiousness, and gives him definite instructions, the content of which must be of especial importance; for the margravine, who sits in the centre of the terrace, where she has just been playing with her children and has given to little Paolo an apple (at which the older boy, Lodovico, looks down not without disdain), now follows with attentive gaze what her husband has to say to the secretary. To the right, on yonder steps, some cavaliers are greeting each other. The one has just stepped in through the half-drawn portière, two of the margrave's followers hasten toward him

with cordial gestures. Nevertheless, access to the terrace appears not to be permitted unconditionally to every one; at any rate another cavalier, who also wishes to enter through the portière, is being stopped halfway by a page. Of course the double event—the letter and the visit—has attracted the attention of some gen-

2. ANDREA MANTEGNA
The Family of Ludovico Gonzaga, ca. 1470, Mantova, Castello Sforzesco.

tlemen of the court; some are looking at the margrave, others at the scene on the steps. Only a few persist in the ceremonial passivity which had evidently been universally prevalent until the two incidents had brought animation into the group; it is those who stand so far to the rear that they have not yet noticed anything of the two happenings. Only the female court-dwarf, who from her point of vantage might have been able to ob-

serve something, seems to insist upon preserving her dignity. Small as she is—she hardly reaches to the knee of the margravine, at whose right she stands—she compresses her lips indignantly and stands as stiffly erect as a sentry presenting arms.

This intentionally rather detailed analysis of the family portrait at Mantua is intended to impart to the reader a conception of Mantegna's many-sided and keen observation, which is typical of the style of this entire period, and which distinguishes fundamentally the portraiture of the fifteenth century from that of the sixteenth. As particularly noteworthy in this regard we may consider perhaps these features: the animation of the whole work, intensified to the point of dramatic suddenness by the fact that the quietly expectant figures in the background constitute as it were the situation before the sudden occurrence of the episodes, and thus form a sort of exposition whereby the subsequent happening is logically prepared for and appears at the same time intensified in its effect; further, a completely graded differentiation of all the characters depicted: princely languor in the margrave; officiousness in the secretary, showing its tension in every wrinkle of the face; passive interest in the margravine; genuine childlike behavior in the children, with special gradations of its own; arrogantly courtly behavior in some younger cavaliers, temperately dignified attention on the part of those "grown gray in service." Down to the minutiæ of costume extends this factual detailed realism. Perhaps Mantegna imparted a certain weakness to the total effect by these infinite nuances. At any rate, the repeated experience of standing before the picture teaches us that the eternal necessity of studying details prevents

3. RAPHAËL

The School or Athens, 1509, Rome, Vatican.

us from achieving an enjoyable grasp of the picture as a whole. Truth was not yet identical with "beauty"; that does not come until the age of Raphael.

Raphael's famous frescoes in the *Stanza della Segnatura* of the Vatican (1509–11) were from the standpoint of his artistic problem really nothing but "family portraits," although in a higher sense. The "School of Athens" (3), for example, is an idealized mass-portrait of the fellowship of the philosophers, laid out on a monumental scale, and so belongs in type among those "group-portraits" at whose beginning stands a work like Mantegna's Gonzaga family, at its end a picture like Rembrandt's "Night Watch." Raphael drew some single heads and figures with such convincing vividness that one could swear, for example, that Plato and Aristotle, the central figures, were drawn from life. Actually, they derive not even from ancient portraits, but from Raphael's imaginative vision. And yet, despite this universally evident and convincing semblance of life, there is left in the recollection of the beholder not, as in the case of Mantegna, the impression of a sum of more or less loosely joined details; rather has the conception of a unity resulting from the pure harmony of the parts mostly impressed itself firmly upon our memory before we even take notice of the separate heads: held together by the triple central vaulted arch, a broad strip of upright figures in the middle; and this intimately connected (observe the flood of movement forward and backward over the steps) with two groups in the front right and left corners, each embraced in a semicircle. Whoever has but once absorbed with understanding eye this simple and yet so powerfully unifying structure of Raphael, will afterward scarcely be able to

forget the total impression as he studies its details; the less so that in all the many divisions of the composition there is not one subdivision that is not articulated with the whole under the same subordinating principle.

4. RAPHAEL

Portrait of Francesco Maria della Rovere. Detail from "The School of Athens," 1509, Rome, Vatican.

The famous group at the left (4) contains, exactly in the centre, the figure of a wonderfully beautiful youth in whom we think we recognize Francesco Maria della Rovere. It is at any rate the only identifiable portrait in that group, and indeed it appears to have been for his sake that the entire rich configuration was devised in the shape which it now has. The crouching, kneeling, forward and backward bending ideal figures

on both sides form a network of curves—with contrapuntal enrichment of pattern, yet uncommonly translucent—all of which have but one object, namely to seek, as it were, to support, and to emphasize as something unique, that one pure vertical line in the centre: the portrait of della Rovere. We do not say that by virtue of Raphael's mode of seeing and planning, in which he deviates from Mantegna and the fifteenth century, he is any "better" than Mantegna, of whose incomparably penetrating objectivity Raphael's eloquent formalism, for example, has not a trace. What we have here is rather a fundamental difference between the two generations. Raphael's grandly rhythmical compositions differ from the style of Mantegna, which aims at careful, objective, detailed analysis, about as formality differs from objectivity. A distinction which can be pointed out in all other phases of the life of those epochs. The botanical gardens, for example, which certain collectors interested in the multiplicity of plant-genera had laid out in the fifteenth century, may very well have afforded the eye the most varied and gayest of pictures. But those who planned them had less of an æsthetic than of an objective motive. Nevertheless, the planless confusion was also appropriate to the taste of the time, which looked to the details rather than to the whole effect. When later on in the century of classic art the principle "selection as a means to a perfect unity" gained the upper hand in this domain as elsewhere, the gardens were no longer filled with all manner of trees that were pleasant to the sight, as in the Garden of Eden, but were systematized to preserve the greatest possible unity in detail, though, of course, in accordance with clearly structural, architectonic points of

view. These garden "plans" of the sixteenth century, however, would presumably have seemed inconceivably dull and æsthetically false to the people of the fifteenth century, if they could have seen them.

To be sure, we must not overlook the fact that the altered position of Raphael and his contemporaries signified, at least in part, a wholesome reaction. A new and basically very sensitive feeling for the innate dignity of the object took the defensive here against the excesses which the reckless realism of the late fifteenth century, gradually becoming somewhat too vociferous, had allowed to creep in, especially with regard to the employment of portraits in narrative paintings. With what reserve had even the fourteenth century given the secular portrait access to altar-paintings and frescoes. If the donor wanted to appear, say in a picture of the Madonna, he was put in at some unobtrusive point and made smaller than the other figures. Soon however—we do not know whether at the instance of the artists or the donors—a certain democratic claim to equal rights asserted itself. The donor is soon distinguished in no respect from the saints. Indeed, the mighty Sigismondo Malatesta, who thought more of his own honor and that of his beloved Isotta than of God, when he caused Alberti to transform the old Franciscan church in Rimini into a temple of pagan splendor, and who wished to have himself pictorially perpetuated therein, intrusted to Piero dei Franceschi a commission that was neither more nor less than a monstrous blasphemy. (5.) Although the theme of the picture was to be the adoration by Malatesta of St. Sigismund, the donor went so far as not only to reserve for himself the chief position in the centre of the painting, but more than

that—and that was the unheard-of effrontery—to have his favorite greyhounds portrayed beside him at an optically important point. Indeed, more for the sake of these hounds than for that of Malatesta himself, St. Sigismund had to put up with being thrust against the extreme outer edge of the picture. If hunting-dogs were

5. PIERO DEI FRANCESCHI

Sigismondo Malatesta Kneeling before St. Sigismund, 1451, Rimini, San Francesco.

allowed such posts of honor, then it was not greatly surprising that before long the donor was accompanied by his wife and children, or even that his mistress made her unembarrassed appearance on the holy scene. Next they put on the robes of the saints and take part in the drama. The distinction between ideal figure and portrait thus becomes more and more blurred. When Benozzo Gozzoli about 1460 paints a great wall-picture

containing the procession of the Three Kings (in the chapel of the Riccardi palace at Florence), the painting swarms with great figures of the day. The rôles of the three kings are assigned to Johannes Palæologus (the next to last of the Byzantine emperors), the Patriarch of Constantinople, and Cosimo Medici. Indeed even the setting is a landscape-portrait: it is the heights of Settignano and Fiesole, over which the train of the wise men from the East marches down into Florence. Against such abuses the wrath of Savonarola was directed: "The figures that you cause to be painted in the churches are the portraits of your idols, and the young people say then at sight of this woman or that: behold, that is St. Magdalen, or, that is St. John, because you make your figures in the churches like to this man or that woman." Botticelli seems to have taken such admonitions of the preacher of San Marco literally to heart. Shortly before this sermon (1495) he had allowed the entire Medici family, and himself besides, to appear in an "Adoration of the Magi." After Savonarola's death all reminiscences of the great contemporaries in his city cease entirely in his pictures.

Now of course there would be no objection *per se*, unless it were on purely religious grounds, to having painters choose their models from living persons. So long as those portrayed functioned solely as models, modestly subordinating themselves in other respects to the dramatic course of events, the animation of the picture could but profit by it. Leonardo's infinitely solemn and deeply dramatic "Last Supper" owes the greater share of its convincing power to the circumstance that every head is a portrait, even though a portrait in a higher sense. But this very self-subordination to the

higher restraints of the pictorial ideas seems to have soon ceased to satisfy the fame-seeking donors of the late fifteenth century. The universally apparent, guiding, basic individualism of the time was carried in art *ad absurdum*, as it were, when the princes finally wanted to be portrayed in the church pictures, as heretofore, but refused to take part in the legitimate dramatic action. They wanted to play a special rôle which did not appear in the play; they wanted, something like the farmers-general in the France of the eighteenth century, to remain visible in the proscenium-boxes beside the stage; in short, they wanted to be mentioned by name. Then, to be sure, the public no longer said: "Behold, that is John, that is Mary Magdalen," but: "Look, that is the rich Mr. Soandso, who donated so much money for the picture." That is the situation which confronts us in the frescoes of Ghirlandajo in the choir of Santa Maria Novella, Florence (about 1490), where, in order to get to the heart of the story told, we must first work our way through two or three rows of onlookers, standing indifferently by in the every-day garb of Florence. (6.)

In view of the fact that to-day we always involuntarily take the æsthetics of the classical century as starting-point, we are overinclined to stress as reprehensible the otherness in such works of the early Renaissance, like the above-named frescoes of Ghirlandajo; whereby we shut ourselves off from the only possible road to the appreciation of the positive achievements of that creative art-epoch. Even though the Renaissance at its height produced in many respects a perfection of that which the early Renaissance had attained, yet these later developments would be simply unthinkable with-

6. GHIRLANDAJO

Zachariah and the Angel, 1490, Florence, Santa Maria Novella.

out their early stages, which not only showed the way at all points, but created it to begin with. Hence nothing is fundamentally more unjust than to measure that early epoch by a standard that is not derived from itself, but only from a later and much more freely operating art. Of course that makes the entire *Quattrocento* appear in a false light. Any one, for example, who takes as an absolute norm the pictorial unity of Raphael's monumental compositions can naturally only record the lack of such pictorial unity in the works of Filippo Lippi, Mantegna, or Botticelli, and will then not usually inquire as to whether that period regarded the later tendencies of a Raphael as at all worthy of emulation. An unprejudiced study of the possible intentions of those early masters would not only be more just, but above all more fruitful. It would clearly reveal, for example, that the essentially formalistic-æsthetic attitude of Raphael was in certain respects one-sided and signified an unmistakable impoverishment as compared with the versatile and exhaustive wealth of expression of the fifteenth century.

A parallel comparison from the field of poetry would produce the same result. Boiardo, the author of *Orlando Amoroso* (first published as fragment in 1486), is certainly innocent of that finished and smooth style of composition that makes every canto of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (first published as fragment in 1516) appear as a unit to which nothing can be added, from which nothing taken, without irreparable injury to the whole. Also, Boiardo's heroes have not the unified characterization employed by Ariosto. Boiardo's cantos are composed like a frieze; their effect would scarcely be impaired if they were longer or shorter, and the poet treats his heroes

alternately with seriousness or humor, as the fancy takes him. But whoever has but once abandoned himself naïvely to the warm and blissful sparkle of Boiardo's world will probably find the reading of Ariosto rationally cold, æsthetically artificial, and colorless, and it might easily be that he would long to return from Ariosto's impeccable but chilly formality to the less sophisticated but more warmly inspired realm of Boiardo's imagination.

So let us not lock our hearts against the positive creative energies of which the *Quattrocento* was so overprolific. Above all, let us keep clearly in mind that there is manifested in the unfeigned deep joy that derives from the beautiful appearance of things an optimism, an unconditional, sense-jubilant acceptance of the world and of life, of which the rationalistic, coolly calculating and circumspect nature of the *Cinquecento* unfortunately possessed hardly even a reflection. Optimists always like to remain on the surface of things; they have little inclination to probe the depths. So it was with the fifteenth century. Rarely indeed did its naïve joy of beholding yield to the craving for an intellectual interpretation of the world.

IV

This joy of vision, however, was inextricably connected with the self-consciousness and self-confidence of the individual, of which we have already spoken. And from the coworking of these two forces there came into painting an element that was subsequently to prove uncommonly important. We will designate it to start with quite generically as subjectivity. This

subjectivity, which distinguishes the art of the Renaissance quite fundamentally from that of Greece and Rome, has shown itself most creative at the point where it was a question of solving an elementary problem in the representation of reality, namely in solving the problem of spatial representation by means of perspective. To make that clear, to be sure, I must start somewhat farther back.

The representation of bodies appearing simultaneously behind each other in space had remained by no means an unknown quantity to mediæval art, which had however at first avoided such matters where possible. Besides, a possible ultimate development of the representation of depth in monumental wall-paintings was opposed with full force throughout the entire Middle Ages by architecture, which acted in uncommonly arbitrary fashion. Whoever has experienced the architectonic rhythms of classic Byzantine churches, for example St. Sophia in Constantinople, knows the fact and the reason that those vaulting arches and floating surfaces will tolerate no space-portraying pictures as decoration. Any attempt to employ perspective would of course have been tantamount to an apparent perforation of the spatially terminal vaulting, and indeed to an annihilation of the entire static and dynamic rhythm attained by this special type of space-limitation. Not surface-*destroying*, only surface-*emphasizing* elements were appropriate here: shimmering gold ground, patterned by colored surface designs and superficially rippling linear arabesques. To such elementary requirements of mediæval architecture any artist will, striving for some form of natural representation of space, must have had to bow, even if there had been any such will in existence

in the then prevailing philosophy of the flight from reality. "Space" throughout the entire Middle Ages was exclusively placed under the administration of the architects; which alone explains why the problems it involves did not emerge in mediæval painting. And indeed, what effect could have been secured by a painting that sought to give the illusion of space against the boundless height and depth of a Gothic cathedral? Would not the unexampled impetus of the actual construction have inevitably and ingloriously crushed the presumption of the painter who might have tried to vie with it? And so the monumental painting of the Gothic period restricted itself first and last to the surface decoration of the glass windows, and to gold-ground paintings for altar-pieces.

With such a course of development, it is only natural that whatever modes of expression the ancient world had once evolved in the field of the representation of space were soon completely forgotten. Of the landscape-painting of the ancients, already quite highly developed in Hellenistic times (the so-called Homer-landscapes in the Vatican testify to this), there was soon nothing left but a mere linear indication of strips of ground under the feet of the figures. Perspective position was indicated by the vertical arrangement of such strips and figures. The upper figures signified rearward, the lower forward position. Nevertheless there was, especially in Byzantine art, also a perspective gradation of the magnitudinal relations of the figures, only that in this connection "perspective" meant just about the exact opposite of what it has meant since the days of the Renaissance.

On the pediment of the obelisk of Theodosius the

Great in Constantinople (390 A. D.) there is a representation of the emperor watching a chariot-race in the circus. In customary fashion, the composition of the relief is made up of horizontally echeloned strips, so that rearward objects are at the top, forward ones at the bottom. Below we can see the racing-chariots, at the top the emperor in his box. Now we should expect that the objects closest to the spectator, in this case the chariots, would be large, and that what is most remote from the spectator, in this case the emperor, would be on a small scale. Such is at least the demand of the principle established by the Renaissance, that perspective foreshortening and diminution must be referred to the point of view of the artist or the observer of the picture; that is, an absolutely subjective principle. In the Constantinople relief, however, the perspective arrangement is directly reversed (for which reason we call the type there employed the "inverted perspective"). The sculptor has proceeded thus in his objective method, which deviates from ours: he represents the scene as it appears to the most important person *depicted* in it, without considering that the beholder might eventually be more important than the emperor for whom the work was made. So the emperor, although he is farthest removed from the spectator, is the largest figure; the people who sit in the lower tiers, and hence somewhat distant from him, are smaller; but smallest of all are the racing-chariots, which of course are farthest from the emperor.

Whereas the art of the Far East retained until far into the seventeenth century this inverted, objective perspective of the Byzantines, the Italian Renaissance took from the very beginning the subjective point of

view that the one who looked at the picture was the one to whom the perspective representation of space was to be related. And thus the transformation of the flat surface of the picture into a three-dimensional actual space is completed during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from Cimabue by way of Giotto and his school.

Step by step the development proceeds. Figures are rounded out in light and shade. Overlappings, slanting positions, and rear views are introduced, to demonstrate the perspective relation of things in space. Cast-shadows combine the figures with the ground, and by means of the geometric devices of the so-called "central perspective projection," ground, walls, and ceilings are painted foreshortened. Finally Brunellesco succeeds in constructing an entire inner room as a unit according to the law of vanishing-point and focal point. For a whole long period now there is no more burning question in the art-circles of Florence than the problems of perspective projection. Vasari tells how Paolo Uccello squandered his entire life on the solution of the most complicated problems of perspective, and how he had finally succeeded, as highest achievement, in the correct representation of a seventy-two sided polyhedron. The scientific element reveals itself at this early stage of art in the field of perspective about as vigorously as it did a little later in that of anatomy and proportion. The subjective phase of the matter deserves careful attention. For the thinking and calculating intelligence seeks in this case, on the basis of empiric experience, not the existence-forms of actual things, but, quite subjectively, the forms in which they appear. They soon find out, for example, that a person lying on the ground facing

the beholder looks totally different from one who stands upright in a normal front view. A horse seen from the rear instead of from the side becomes an ever new problem to that same Uccello of whom we just spoke. In the Middle Ages, the picture of a chair continued to be something quite independent of the way in which its appearance constantly varied with the point of view of the beholder, something which tallied completely with the knowledge of what a chair is: four legs, a rectangular seat, a straight-lined back. For the new subjective school the picture of a chair might show three or only two legs, and the rectangular seat might, because of definite distortions of perspective, turn into a triangle, or even into a mere line. Still more surprising discoveries were made when overlappings were studied. The fifteenth century never wearies of playing with such effects, for example, the fact that one may see of an entire figure only an arm or half a face, because the other parts are concealed for the moment by something else. Wholly new revelations then resulted from the study of light and color, whose relation to perspective, one may assume, was first scientifically probed by Domenico Veneziano. We, the "laughing heirs" of the pictorial science of those great discoverers, can to-day hardly attain an adequate conception of the joyful excitement which must have taken possession of those primitive painters when they found out for the first time that a shadow which passed simultaneously over a figure and over the contiguous section of the encompassing space would fuse as color values parts that quite objectively considered had nothing to do with each other, or that the same shadow would separate optically parts that according to all previous

knowledge belonged together—as for instance the two halves of a face. What a discovery, too, was the perspective of color and light; the observation for example that green-wooded hills appear blue in the distance. The public that was first asked to swallow the idea that green hills were supposed to be blue may well have fumed at the subjectivistic impudence of the painters no less than a modern public at a futurist exhibit. But they could not restrain the tremendous advances of the creative spirit that was working at the discovery of space and landscape.

V

Upon its experience of apparent space is based the power of the new painting, by virtue of which it was soon able to achieve the primacy of all the other arts, and literally to make its dependents those other two arts of architecture and sculpture.

Even Donatello, the great sculptor, designed the reliefs with which he decorated the high altar in the Santo at Padua (1445–48) quite in the manner of paintings. Mighty chambers represented in perspective, in which masses of people are spatially thronging; the plan of these bronze reliefs is already so pictorial that in the Vatican frescoes which Raphael painted about sixty years later he could derive suggestions from them. But in the famous bronze reliefs on the doors of the Florentine baptistery (1425–50), Ghiberti goes so far in the desire to vie with contemporary painting that he even transfers to his bronze sculptures the problems of aerial perspective, as is proven by the blurred distances in his landscapes.

Since of course sculpture as well as painting is funda-

mentally based on Nature, it is relatively easy to understand that the swift development of painting was able to influence it. But it is harder to see how painting could subordinate even architecture. And yet—not without deep psychological necessity—that was what happened. The dominating position which painting unquestionably held with respect to the other arts in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries took its beginnings from the fifteenth century; this result was probably due solely to the fact that painting is the most subjective and individualistic of the arts, and thus presented the most adaptable means of expression for the new subjective-individualistic philosophy.

The thing itself might call for the following comment.

Monumental painting can either place itself unconditionally in the service of architecture; in this case it subordinates itself to and supports the intentions of the architect, for example by emphasizing surfaces, where they exist, as such. So it was in the Middle Ages, as we have already shown with reference to St. Sophia in Constantinople and the Gothic cathedrals. But painting can also, if it will, run counter to architectonic intentions to a certain very high degree, it can reinterpret the existing separate surfaces into openings by means of perspective devices, and can thus ultimately compel the architect to adapt his plans to the demands of the painter, whereby he then lapses into dependence on the painter. This came to be the situation during the Renaissance.

Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni chapel at Padua (1305; stories from the lives of St. Anne, Mary, and Jesus), despite their many realistic features, in which

as with the stir of mighty wings the genius of a new age of realism is manifest, are nevertheless in one respect a classic monument of mediæval art, in that their composition emphasizes the two-dimensional, space-

7. GIOTTO
Judas Betrays Christ, 1305, Padua, Scrovegni Chapel.

bounding character of the walls. (7.) All the new spatial effects in detail—rounded, vigorously overlapping figures, perspective views of landscapes and rooms —cannot outweigh the effect of the deep-blue, as it were abstract, background which clings tightly to the surface, which extends to the very margin of all the

pictures in the Scrovegni chapel, and which thus imparts not only to each several painting but to the totality of the wall-decoration the unmistakable quality of a tapestry. It signifies a fundamentally different attitude when Masaccio, just about a century later, opens out in the frescoes of the Brancacci chapel at Florence

8. MASACCIO
The Tribute Money, 1425, Florence, Santa Maria del Carmine, Brancacci Chapel.

a veritable deep-stage setting, on which in place of the abstract mediæval blue ground an extensive landscape reaches out to the farthest distance. As an example, we may point to Masaccio's painting of the "Tribute Money" (about 1425). (8.) The wall-surface, presumably intended at most for tapestry-like decoration, has been transformed by the painter's space-illusion into an opening, whereby of course the architectural proportions of the entire chapel are shifted. And when he places the vanishing-point of his painted perspective at one level with the eye of the beholder—so that the latter must deem himself on one and the same plane with the figures represented—then indeed is the perfect illusion created that where the architect had placed a solid wall there is now a niche in the form of a chapel.

9. MASACCIO

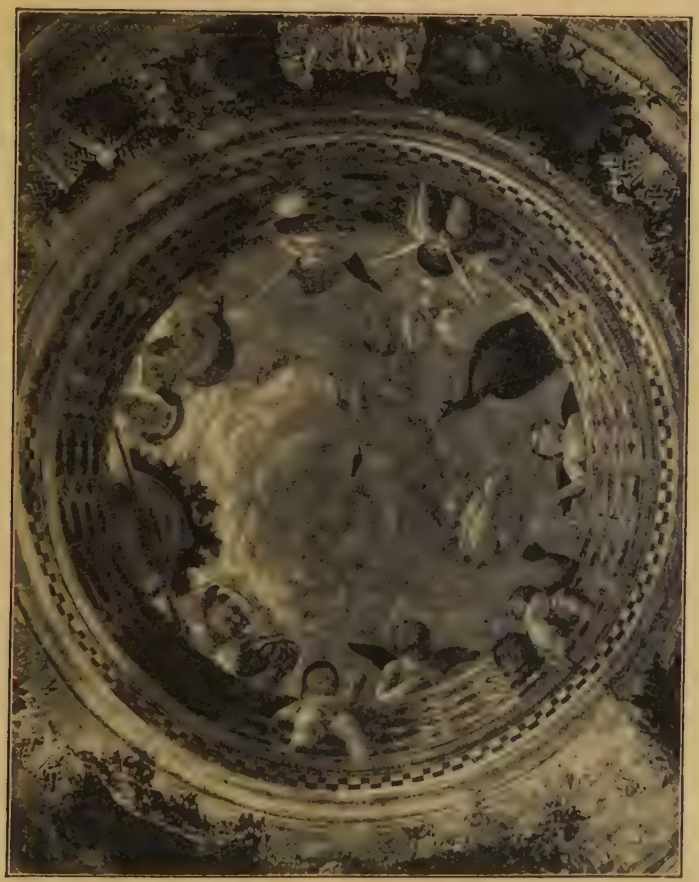
Holy Trinity, Saints, and Donors, 1427, Florence, Santa Maria Novella.

This impression cannot be escaped by any one who stands before Masaccio's last great work, the fresco "Holy Trinity, Saints, and Donors" (1427, Florence, Santa Maria Novella) (9); the wall is æsthetically wiped out by the illusory devices of the painter.

The next step is then that painters, when they have an entire chamber to decorate as a unit, assume a common point of view for all the wall-paintings and thus replace the four walls, as it were, by a connected cyclorama. The resulting effect is that the spectator standing (say) in the middle of the room receives the impression that all the walls about him have disappeared, with the exception of a few strips of frame; for his gaze roves apparently beyond the architectonic bounds into open, broad landscapes.

Mantegna was the first one to go farther and even include the ceiling in a pictorial system which served to carry out the illusion of transforming given architectonic spaces. (10.) The ceiling of the bridal chamber in the palace at Mantua is pierced in the centre by a funnel-like opening through which the sky peers in; and from the roof a merry gathering even peeps down through this opening—somewhat indiscreetly, to be sure—into the cozy seclusion of the nuptial apartment. The surprising effectiveness of this Mantegna owed solely to his unmatchable "perspective from below" (*prospettiva dï sotto in su*), or what we now call the "frog's-eye view." But what Mantegna ventured to attempt only in a relatively small section of the ceiling at Mantua encouraged a Melozzo da Forli to far bolder experiments, and at the same time to still more daring reinterpretations of originally fixed architectonic proportions. In the cupola of the sacristy of Loreto (1478) (11)

Melozzo set himself the task of representing eight angels seen from below as floating unsupported within the dome. It was the first recorded attempt of the new



10. MANTEGNA

Centre of painted ceiling of the Bridal Chamber, ca. 1470, Mantua, Castello Sforzesco.

school to give the illusion of a body floating in space, for which reason it was not wholly successful; the effect is somewhat as if the angels were being forced from

below against the ceiling and reminds us of an air-bubble rising in a glass of water. But apart from this, Melozzo went far beyond Mantegna, in that he no longer

11. MELOZZO DA FORLI

Section from painted vaults of the Capella della Tesoreria in Loreto Cathedral, 1478.

confined himself to the architecturally bounded section of the vaulting, but intensified the illusion of depth uncommonly by having the foreshortened figures, hover-

ing in space, overlap the make-believe framework of the dome. Melozzo went even farther than in Loreto when he painted the vaulting of the apse of Santi Apos-

12. MELOZZO DA FORLI
Fragment of painted vault of Choir of Santi Apostoli, 1481, Rome, Quirinal

toli in Rome (1481). (12.) Here the monumental painting of illusion—that is, in the Renaissance sense: the complete transformation of an architectonically fixed, two-dimensionally bounded space into the pictorial illusion of an unbounded space—celebrates its first unmixed triumph. (To-day only remnants of this impressive

work are left, in the Vatican and the Quirinal at Rome.) The Ascension was so depicted that under the painter's magic wand the stonework conch seemed to disappear. In its stead one saw Heaven open, and Christ, standing on a cloud, soared upward into it, encompassed by the resounding music of the angels and followed by the longing gaze of his earth-bound apostles. Every one of that day who looked up at this wondrous sight must have felt as if he were an eye-witness of an event that was transpiring in the sky. The few traces of awkwardness that marred his first grappling with perspective in Loreto had been fully overcome by Melozzo at Santi Apostoli; the separately foreshortened figures of the former are fused here into collectively foreshortened masses, and the excessively literal conception of "floating," which we pointed out in the angels of Loreto, has now given way to a total movement of unexampled suggestiveness.

From this point it seems to have been only a short little step to the illusion-miracles of Correggio, who, by the boldest extension of the principle of a subjective upward view, even to the utmost limits of the æsthetically permissible, treated the narrow, heavy dome of the cathedral at Parma so as to make it fairly dissolve in thin air. Before he painted "The Assumption of the Virgin" (1530) (13), the confining, fusty architectonic proportions of this dome must have positively repelled the upward gaze of the beholder, crushing it with their weight. But now that Correggio's Heaven has opened, into which a swirling, jubilant throng of apostles, angels, and saints, soaring in ever-diminishing circles, accompany the upward flight of the Virgin, who stretches out her arms in longing—since that day the mediæval

13. CORREGGIO
Assumption of Virgin, Dome of Parma Cathedral, 1530.

narrowness of the vault is burst asunder, and this dome now draws our gaze as with magic power out beyond the limits of the structure into the infinite void.

Such illusion-painting, with its ability to break through all material confines and carry the imagination out into the boundless universe—was it not the highest fulfilment of that basic psychological trait, so deeply rooted in the men of the Renaissance: the indomitable will to rove? Yes. And of that longing that enticed for the first time a poet of the thirteenth century—it was Petrarch—to ascend a lofty mountain, that his eye might be satiated for once with an infinite prospect; of that longing to penetrate to the ends of the earth and find new continents which flamed in the blood of all the discoverers and brought to the lips of Columbus the word: *Il mondo e poco* (The world is small); of that longing which led to the discovery of the new means of artistic expression, so that this same longing might likewise find expression in art. This school of painting is simply not to be understood in its ultimate choice of goals, if we fail to take into consideration its antagonistic relation to architecture. Architecture which sets limits, which bounds human life—so absolutely characteristic of the Middle Ages—was subdued for many years to come by that painting which created the illusion of a boundless ideal space. No builder might henceforth deem, as heretofore, that he had said the last word with the objective means of expression employed by his art. The new subjective painting was capable at any time of transforming a structural fact into a pictorial fiction, of dissolving the solid masonry of boundary walls, and reinterpreting all the well-planned proportions into other and more limitless ones.

Now it admits of no doubt, to be sure, that from Mantegna's ceiling in Mantua a path of direct development leads by way of Melozzo's frescoes in Loreto and Rome to Correggio's illusion-painting in the cathedral at Parma. It must however be said by way of supplement that the last-named work, the revelation of one of the most progressive and epoch-making among the classic painters of Italy, diverges in one very essential point from all the works of his predecessors. The art of Correggio is no longer based, like that of Mantegna and Melozzo, exclusively upon the plastically suggestive force of the drawing, to which the color is merely added, so to speak, as an enrichment, but it is based first and foremost upon the illusion-creating power of the color. The Parma frescoes are a veritable miracle in color.

To be a little more specific on this important point: any one back in the fifteenth century, when the dome of Santi Apostoli was still intact, who may have stood on the floor of the church and looked up at "The Ascension of Christ," which Melozzo had painted there, might well have been overwhelmed by the startling reality of the perspective view, the tangible depiction of the rounded bodies, the expressive force of the faces and gestures. Correggio, indeed, has not even increased the actual tangibility so very much. But that which makes his work almost incommensurable with that of Melozzo is the tempestuous might and beauty of his pure colors. There emanates directly from Correggio's paint an intoxicating effect that can almost make one forget the supremely successful realism in his description of attitudes and heads. This effect does to be sure correspond absolutely with the excitation depicted in the single

figures, but it also consists in the mere harmony of the gleaming reds, blues, yellows, oranges, and therefore exists independently side by side with that which this color, in the naturalistic sense, undertakes to depict. This art depends upon a knowledge of the essence of color, of which at least the central Italian predecessors of the Parman master had as yet no knowledge whatsoever.

VI

This brings me to the discussion of a matter that cannot but be of particular importance in any study of the genesis of modern art, but that hitherto, in the course of our investigation, has had to give precedence to the treatment of other problems. I mean color.

We of to-day, whose æsthetic views have been schooled to the very greatest extent by the problems current in the painting of the last fifty years, are mostly of the opinion that the problem of color must have played the same rôle, namely the foremost one, in the painting of all ages. But that has by no means been the case. On the contrary, as early as the fifteenth century in Italy there came into view an antithesis between two divergent trends that was subsequently to attain to the greatest significance: I mean the antithesis between a school of painting, on the one hand, that did indeed make use of color, but that laid far greater emphasis upon a sharp delineative representation of reality, and that strove, next to that, for a maximally precise working out of the plastic rounding of bodies together with a sharp linear perspective; and, on the other hand, a style of painting that took as its starting-point the

colored surface of phenomena, the atmosphere that binds all colors, and considered everything else as secondary to this. This antithesis is to be found in Italy even during the *Quattrocento;* on the one side we have the central Italians under the leadership of the Florentines—let us invent a catchword and call it the Party of Plastic Design—on the other side stand the Venetians as representatives of the Coloristic Trend.

Whoever fixes his attention merely upon the progress made in the realistic reproduction of the external world, or upon progress in purely technical respects, will find the course of development in the painting of Florence and Venice during the Renaissance fairly analogous. From Jacobello del Fiore to the school of Murano, to the Bellinis, Carpaccio, and Cima da Conegliano of Venice, there leads a road of development that with respect to technical progress and the mastering of the problem of reality looks very similar to the one that goes from Masaccio to Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, and Ghirlandajo at Florence. Refinement in the reproduction of visibility, improvement in drawing, and above all in perspective and space-presentation, mastering of the technical problems, these designate in both schools stages upon a highway that finally ends, at the opening of the new century, in the royal perfection of that supreme Renaissance style in which, viewed in this light, Raphael and Giorgione stand side by side and hand in hand.

Viewed in another way, however, there is an enormous difference between the development of the central Italian and the Venetian schools. The progress which we record in technical mastery and in the observation of Nature is essentially one of plastic delineation with

the Florentines; but in Venice we have to do with an ever more perfect reproduction of Nature's colors.

One can approach visible things in two very different ways. One of these, somewhat crudely phrased, is this: the phenomenon is fixed in accordance with its outlines, and its plastic factual content, its modelling, is just as precisely registered with respect to the relation of light and shade. Theoretically, such a mode of representation could dispense with color altogether and could get along with only two opposite tones such as black and white. The most salient characteristic of such a mode in art is that the visible objects are set forth more with respect to their plastic substance than to their mere visual appearance, and hence that all convexities and undulations of their surfaces are touched upon, as it were with fingers, through the intervening space. To set forth the actual plastic content in full completeness through the most definite determination of all its boundaries and with means that lie fundamentally in the field of drawing—planimetric line-perspective is one of them—this is the essential aim of artists who follow the one trend.[2]

[2]L. B. Alberti, one of the great Florentines who theorized on the art of the fifteenth century, defines painting thus in his *Three Books on Painting:* "Thus painting will be nothing other than the artistic representation, achieved upon a surface by means of lines and colors, of a cross-section of the visual pyramid [*i. e.*, the visual rays which converge upon a distant point, therefore pyramidal.—Author's note], in accordance with a definite distance, a definite point of vision, and a definite illumination." The undisguised plastic tendency in Alberti's definition of painting finds still clearer expression in subsequent passages. "When painting sets out to represent visible things," he says, "then we must first remember *how we see things*." At this point we involuntarily imagine what a Venetian colorist would have been likely to answer to the question how he saw things. But the Florentine speaks as if there were no color-sensations on the retina, but merely colorless, palpable, space-filling bodies: "The beginning then is that I see any object at all; *we call an object that which fills a space.*" At a later point in his treatise Alberti recommends to the painter a technical working process which calls to mind the procedure of a modelling sculptor, laying one lump of clay upon another and working outward from the centre, much more than that of the

I admit that in Florence color also fulfils not only decorative but naturalistic purposes. But compared to that which color signifies in Venice, it can only be regarded as an enrichment in Florentine painting, as something which in the last analysis might have been omitted.[3] For in all the Florentine pictures, with scanty exceptions, the drawing alone mostly accomplished the miracle of the depiction of reality, long before color came in to intensify and beautify the result.

The other way of representing visibility in painting is more familiar to us; it is that of the pure colorist. The colorist absorbs the beauty of phenomena in terms of their colored stimuli on the retina, and reproduces them by virtue of his inborn instinct for the elemental beauty of color. What appeals to him in objects is not their rounding or their palpability, but their shimmering, gleaming surface. What fascinates him is not the boundaries that delimit things from each other as with walls of steel, but that which combines them into one tonal harmony, the atmosphere in which they float. Heedless of the plastic continuity of the convex surfaces, he forces the eye to leap across dim abysses of shadow from one peak of light to another. The impressionism

painter who works inward from the colored surface. "In order to hold fast a definite relationship in the measurements of the limbs, it will be of great advantage to draw first the skeleton of the living being, then to add the muscles, and then to invest the whole with flesh. But at this point somebody might make the objection that for the painter only the visible parts of things are of importance. Rightly do they remind me of this; but just as one draws a figure first naked and thereafter robes it with garments [Alberti is reckoning here with a typically Florentine studio practice, likewise derived from the sculptor's technic], just so, when we paint the naked body, let us begin by laying out the bones and muscles and then cover them with flesh, so that it may not be difficult to detect under it the position of every muscle."

[3] In the fifteenth century Florence had but a single real colorist among her painters, and he was a Venetian by birth: Domenico Veneziano. The one great coloristic hope of the *Cinquecento* in Florence, Andrea del Sarto, was ultimately ruined, characteristically enough, by the overpowering influence of the sculptor Michelangelo.

of the late nineteenth century, which reduced the whole visible effect to its unmodelled pure color-spot phenomena, merely uttered in so doing the last word in a long coloristic development which—let me say it here

14. TITIAN
Pietà, 1573–1576, Venice, Accademia di belle arti.

with the utmost incisiveness—did not start out from the plastic delineative achievements of the Florentines, but from the coloristic ones of the Venetians. From Giorgione's "Fête Champêtre" in the Louvre, from his "Tempesta" in the Palazzo Giovanelli in Venice, there flows a direct wave of sensation as far as Corot and Manet. And in Titian's last picture, the "Pietà" in the

Academy at Venice (14–16), the broad brushwork, dissecting the color material into spots, already forecasts clearly the modern technic of painting.[4]

In order to visualize clearly the antithesis between

15. TITIAN
Detail of "Pietà," Venice, Accademia di belle arti.

16. TITIAN
Detail of "Pietà," Venice, Accademia di belle arti.

the two schools, as it had existed from the very beginning, in its entire historical bearing, one must look

[4] My judgment upon the exclusively coloristic style of the early Venetians is of course to be understood in a relative sense. The Venetian painters of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century were colorists only within the bounds of style possibilities which their period admitted. As Heinrich Woelfflin has demonstrated in the first chapter of his epoch-making book, *Fundamental Concepts of Art History* (*Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Munich, 1915), the entire art of fifteenth and early sixteenth century Europe was a more or less linear art. The transition to a type of representation that dissolved phenomena into mere spots of color did not come until the last half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, and this likewise affected the entire European art of that epoch. The bounds of a relatively linear mode of seeing could not be wholly overstepped, even by the great colorists of Venice, until the middle of the sixteenth century; it was only Titian (in later years) and Tintoretto that discovered the spotty optical treatment which we might best designate with Woelfflin as the "blurred" style (*der malerische Stil*).

ahead to their two greatest representatives of the *Cinquecento*, who were regarded as direct opposites even by their contemporaries: Michelangelo and Titian. In the art of both men we have embodied the climax of the preceding efforts of their respective national schools. In Michelangelo's specifically sculptural artistry—of which the next chapter will give a detailed account—we have the climax of the Tuscan art-development quite as clearly as we see that of the Venetian school in Titian's colorism. Both artists went their way with a certain one-sidedness. Michelangelo's one-sidedness, gigantic though it was, found expression above all in the fact that he exalted the athletic naked human body —displaying the utmost possible activity in every muscle, interpreted from a purely sculptural point of view, and appearing from the outset in massed effects —to be the exclusive subject of painting in the grand manner. The Sistine Chapel ceiling, the "Last Judgment," and the frescoes in the Capella Paolina prove this with all desirable clearness. The influence of such one-sidedness in his painting was naturally bound to become doubly fateful in view of the fact that during the entire preceding Tuscan development in the fifteenth century plastic delineative tendencies had been fairly whipped into the painters of that school.

Unfortunately, however, the influence of an additional force came in at this very juncture. This force was classical sculpture. During the sixteenth century, whole masses of the marbles of the one-time Roman Empire rose up out of the ground. Now if a previous and more coloristic development of painting—as was actually the case in Venice—had educated the eye and mind of the Florentines to view the sculptures of an-

tiquity without bias and only with the painter's eye, as it were, then the influence of this sculpture would certainly have been less fateful for them. But having had their faces more turned toward sculpture from the outset, and now quite one-sidedly limited, through the overpowering influence of Michelangelo, to the sculpturally conceived nude, the epigones were only able to view classic art, in a sense, through the medium of Michelangelo's highly arbitrary art-idiom. It was not the art of antiquity, as some have occasionally opined, but its false application that rendered central Italian painting unfruitful with such terrifying rapidity. The epigones of Michelangelo lost altogether the naïve connection with Nature that had made their forerunners in the fifteenth century so strong and resourceful, and they grounded their art instead upon a sort of academic scholasticism whose ultimate wisdom was a smooth, dreary statue-painting.

Therefore the influence which this art-trend exerted upon the self-renewing art of the seventeenth century was just as slight as the influence of Titian and the Venetian school came to be great, with their colorism that remained in constant contact with Nature and the technic of painting. El Greco and Velazquez, the great Spaniards, and Rubens, the great Fleming—whom the leading colorists of the nineteenth century revere as their real forebears—issue from the school of Titian, not from that of Michelangelo. So both Michelangelo and Titian became, each in his own fashion, a destiny for art: Michelangelo a ruinous one, Titian a fructifying one.

With this reference to these two figures of the *Cinquecento* I have now, to be sure, reached out beyond the

chronological bounds of this chapter and—with reference to Michelangelo—have even plunged into the midst of the substance of the following one. I thought it permissible to do this, in order to put into its true light the fundamental importance which Venetian colorism possesses even in its beginnings.

Now, from what origins is this difference between the two schools, so important for the subsequent epoch, to be explained? I think there is no more interesting question for the understanding of the genesis of modern painting.

I must confess at once that I am quite sceptical of the current explanation, which states that the climatic and natural conditions in Venice, her moist atmosphere, which makes colors more brilliant and lets the boundaries of objects flow into each other, is the real reason for the colorism of Venice. Let it be admitted without any reservations that the picturesque situation of the city on the lagoon, which delights the painter's eye at all times, may well have been more favorable to the growth of a style that was coloristic from the outset, than was for instance the clear air of the Apennines, in which objects present themselves to the eye in the sharpest modelling, as if engraved on steel. This different situation of the Tuscan landscape, on its part, is commonly cited as the real cause of the plastic tendencies in Florentine art. But even in Tuscany one often encounters hazy moods in the atmosphere, which are congenial and stimulating to the coloristically endowed eye, and I am firmly convinced that Tuscan painting, despite all climatic influence, would never in the world have developed in the well-known plastic delineative manner, had not a certain endowment, more sculptural

than coloristic, been native to the Tuscan from the beginning, and had not in addition a specifically uncoloristic tradition in art put the artistic creations of the Florentines, even at the birth of naturalism, outside the charmed circle of coloristic possibilities. Whoever tries to explain Venetian colorism from the Venetian landscape must willy-nilly reckon first with the fact that Venetian art was coloristically inclined even at a time when Nature had as yet not entered into the realm of artistic attention, that is, far back in the anti-naturalistic Middle Ages. It was not Nature, but a coloristic tradition that had been effective in Venice without interruption since about the eleventh century, that constantly nourished, developed, and kept actively alive the painters' instinct for color, and that in the end, when Nature became the new subject of a new mode in painting, made them receptive to that side of Nature which remained a closed book to the Tuscans, who had not enjoyed such a previous training, namely to the coloristic side of things.

We know, in contrast to this, what an influence the sculptors of Florence exerted upon the painters. The influence of Giovanni Pisano upon Giotto has frequently been remarked upon. Donatello left scarcely one of his painter contemporaries in central Italy uninfluenced, and the studio from which leading Florentine painters issued at the end of the fifteenth century—Leonardo, Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi—*i. e.*, the studio of Verrocchio . . . was the studio of a sculptor. It is very characteristic that the greatest one who went forth from this school, Leonardo, did indeed make observations of color-phenomena, especially touching the alteration of color under the influence of light and at-

mosphere, and registered them in his *Treatise on Painting*—highly original observations which anticipated in the most striking manner some discoveries of the nineteenth-century painters; but that Leonardo never thought of employing these observations practically in his own painting.[5] The axiom that he followed was rather a purely plastic one: "The soul of painting is rounding."

The Venetians, on the other hand, never had an instinct for plastic forms. With few exceptions, all the monumental sculpture of Venice was in a sense imported. And this again is explained by the fact that the roots of Venetian culture lay not in ancient Rome but in Byzantium. And from thence came also those things whereby the colorism of Venetian painting kept itself fresh during all the epochs, those mosaics which, executed uninterruptedly from the eleventh century down to the present, fill the national sanctuary of Venice, the Cathedral of St. Mark. The style of these mosaics contains in embryo the entire subsequent coloristic style of Venice. Without the Byzantine mosaics of San Marco,

[5] Observations on the colors of shadows, *e. g.*, are recorded in the *Trattato della pittura*, which do full justice to the complementary character of the colors of light and shadow. "Oft does it occur that the shadow-color of dark bodies does not agree with the colors in the light, and that the shadows descend into the green, whereas the lights are reddish, although the body is of one color. . . . I have often seen on a white object such lights to be red and the shadows bluish. And this happens in snowy mountains, when the sun sinks behind the hills and the horizon appears as immersed in fire." In another passage of the same treatise, Leonardo records an observation which anticipates the apperceptions of the Impressionists. But Leonardo, who is chiefly concerned that the painting shall above all give a clear picture of the plastic factual content, and that this plastic clarity shall not be obscured by any optic intricacies, hastens to warn the reader against the transfer of his apperception into the practice of painting. "Never represent foliage shone through by the sun; for it is not clear. And this is the case because upon the transparent part of one leaf the shadow of another that hangs above it will be imprinted, which shadow is of sharp outlines and extreme darkness, and sometimes it takes up the half or a third of the leaf upon which it falls. Thus such foliage becomes confused and its reproduction is to be avoided."

the painting of the island city, all the way down to Tiepolo and Guardi, would remain an inexplicable miracle.

The old mosaic contains in a nutshell the basic elements upon which coloristic painting, even including that of the nineteenth-century Impressionists, is grounded. Above all, its style rests upon the beauty of the unbroken color-spots which brilliantly overspread the entire surface. Not by accident has the neo-impressionistic technic of a Seurat and Signac once more reverted ultimately to the dissection of the pictorial surface, mosaic-wise, into unbroken spots of pure primary colors. The carmines, lilacs, and blues of the ancient glass cubes, flaming as it were from within, refined constantly, without any doubt, the color-instinct and the color-sensitivity of a Giovanni Bellini, a Giorgione, a Titian, and a Tintoretto. It was this elemental experiencing of an art in which color still functioned as an end in itself that preserved these masters, in their attempts to hold fast reality in their pictures, from losing themselves, like the Florentines, in sharp drawing and an overdone modelling in light and shade. Moreover, the natural style of the mosaic kept alive and developed further their feeling for the surface-adorning character, for the surface-embellishment of color. The so-called harmony of color gave the Venetian paintings of every epoch a point of internal support, so that their masters could wholly dispense with the Florentine devices for linear composition. What I am suggesting here will perhaps become clearer if one compares, *e. g.*, Raphael's "School of Athens" (3) with the above-mentioned late work of Titian, the "Pietà." (14–16.) Facing Raphael's fresco in the Vatican, one

very soon recognizes how much it owes to his graphic line-pattern. Figures are artfully united into groups, and these groups, again, are most happily arranged to fit the pattern of an arched architecture. A good copper-engraving would be capable of reproducing the real beauty of the composition in a fully satisfying manner. Mild and beautiful, dictated by a taste that is certainly worthy of admiration, a color-scheme is applied to this "drawing" which cannot conceal the fact that it is at bottom something secondary, a merely embellishing enrichment of the completed work. Titian on the other hand, even where he too combines a group of figures with an architectural motif—a lofty niche on each side, with symbolical statues—causes us to forget completely the accidental graphic motif of the outlines both of the acting central group and the architecture, through the appeal of the color-pattern which is independent thereof, and which indeed works directly counter thereto. No engraving and no photograph can convey an approximately adequate conception of this work of Titian. The graphic element of the "Pietà" is wholly indifferent; what fills the depths of our soul with awe is the quiet mysterious illumination that emanates from the color-filled surface, and the deeply mystical harmony of the color-accord: emerald, wine-red, deep blue, and purple.

After all, it is no wonder that the Venetians of the fifteenth century, so deeply saturated with Byzantine colorism, so alienated from all plastic vision, faced Nature from the outset with other eyes than those of the Florentines, and that when in later times the art-theories of central Italy threatened to be imported into Venice, the Venetians were immune to them, as it were.

As to the influence of the Netherlands, likewise purely coloristic, which Antonello da Messina introduced in the seventies of the fifteenth century, they yielded to it readily and with open arms, for that was upon the track of the development predestined for them. But when Mantegna's art-mode, developed in Florence and as hard as flint, came to Venice, it was given at the hands of Giovanni Bellini, Mantegna's brother-in-law, a thorough transformation that was equivalent to an adaptation to the Venetian coloristic mode of expression. Also the art of classical antiquity was viewed by Giorgione and Titian in a very modern fashion, or let us say in a non-Roman manner, *i. e.*, with a painter's eye.

From all that has been said, finally, we can also derive the explanation for the fact that the Venetians took neither art nor reality with such fearful seriousness and thoroughness as the Florentines, who had to finger everything and probe it to its depths. The eye of the painter, which takes a solely pictorial interest and glides over the surface, sees things more naïvely, with less bias, than the groping, hard intellect of the plastic artist. Venice produced no theoreticians, as central Italy did in great quantity.

The happy and light-hearted, indeed often frivolous spirit of the Venetians must by no means be underestimated as to its importance for the history of the development of painting. If at that time in the sixteenth century when all of central Italy yielded itself up unconditionally to the art of Michelangelo, Venice was able simply to reject his overpowering influence, Michelangelo's frankly uncoloristic style was not the only reason for it; at least equally potent was the aversion

which the light-hearted Venetians felt for the "*terribilytà*" of Michelangelo, that fearful, embittered seriousness with which he went to the deepest bottom of all things, precisely as he attacked the marble with his chisel.

But what we have thus far said will only be recognizable in its entire significance when we have occupied ourselves more closely with that antipode of Venetian colorism, with the great figure who embodied the art of central Italy at the height of the Renaissance, Michelangelo. Let us then turn to him.

CHAPTER II

MICHELANGELO

I

We have in Michelangelo, with the possible exception of Julius II, the first fully pronounced type of a Renaissance personality. His individualism, as the most outstanding trait of his character, is so little to be separated from his art that the arbitrariness of the latter, and indeed its subjective one-sidedness, would inevitably remain essentially incomprehensible without it. Although it is one of the literary and methodological principles of this book to avoid biographical details, I venture to deviate for a moment from my rule at this point, in order to bring out into the light, though it be only with a few sketchy biographical strokes, the picture of that personality.

At the beginning of the year 1505 Pope Julius II may have learned through his court architect, Giuliano da San Gallo, that a sculptor of barely thirty years, Michelangelo Buonarroti by name, was making himself widely known in Florence by his achievements in art. The uncrowned kings of Florence, the Medici, had long been treating him like one of the family. Then his fame had even found its way to Rome, and the manner of that had been strange enough: a few years before, the cardinal of San Giorgio had acquired the marble figure of a sleeping cupid, which every one had regarded, because of its exquisite workmanship, as a genuine work of ancient sculpture, until suddenly young Buonarroti, then twenty years old, had confessed himself to be the artist. This

had then induced Jacopo Galli, a connoisseur and collector of antiques, to order of the young man the life-size statue of a drunken Bacchus, and every one had been astonished at the size of the work, as also at the masterful workmanship of it, at once disconcertingly veracious and technically finished. Now Galli in his turn had induced his friend the cardinal of San Dionigi, a Frenchman, to order another work of Michelangelo, which was destined for a chapel in the old basilica of St. Peter, and the young sculptor had unhesitatingly pledged himself in a solemn contract "to furnish a work more beautiful than any in Rome, and better than any living sculptor could produce." The marble group of the youthful Mother of God who holds on her lap her dead son, the famous "Pietà" of St. Peter's, proves that the artist had been serious in his bold promises. Everything in this work was new, unexampled. Lucid and grand in its total outline, simple in every detail, this was the first really unified group-composition of modern plastic art. Every feature of it revealed the spirit of a new ideally minded art-era, no longer the harshly realistic spirit of the fifteenth century. The mute monologue of the Mother, expressed by an unforgetable gesture: the half-opened left hand, as if helplessly reaching out into the void—never before had any one expounded that oft-treated subject in so purely spiritual a fashion. This new spiritual interpretation, together with a technical treatment of the marble that approached virtuosity, had made Michelangelo, soon after the work had been set up in St. Peter's, the most celebrated sculptor of Rome. When he was back in Florence, a few years later, he had once more set the tongues to wagging, again by an unheard-of *tour de force*. Years ago, it seems,

another Florentine sculptor had had the bad luck to make an error in his dimensions as he attempted to chisel a figure from the stone, so that the huge and costly block of marble was ruined and no longer usable. There it had stood now for years; no one could do anything with it. It could not even be used for building purposes, for that unlucky sculptor had driven an ugly hole into the lower part of it. The immense block was moreover of the most unfortunate proportions: very high, and as flat as a board. Some had offered to saw up the stone and use the sections for works of smaller proportions. But Michelangelo engaged to transform the block just as it stood, despite the hole and without increasing or decreasing its proportions, into a monumental statue. The outcome was that gigantic lad, David (22), who is regarded to the present day as the distinctive symbol of Florence (and on whose crown Michelangelo left a small section of the original edge unhewn, as proof that he had kept his promise). The strikingly straddling position of the legs and the scant depth of the colossal figure are explained by the original shape of the remarkable marble. But the astonishment of the Florentines at this technical masterpiece knew no bounds when the same Michelangelo, whom they had all known hitherto solely as sculptor, now offered to match himself against the greatest living *painter*, Leonardo da Vinci, and moreover in the latter's particular specialty, that of mural painting, in order to give him a beating in the estimation of the public—for in fifteenth-century Florence, where art was carried on like a sport, that was the ultimate object of all such competitions. Leonardo, against whom the thirty-year-old Michelangelo was entering the lists, was then fifty-

three, and in the opinion of all there was no greater painter on earth. The one wall of the great council-chamber in the city hall had been turned over to Leonardo in 1503 for a monumental battle-scene. Michelangelo was given the opposite wall, which he also planned to adorn with a battle.

He was just in the midst of this work when Pope Julius heard of the truly sensational career of the young artist. He may have been the more intent on making his acquaintance that he had also heard, incidentally, things about the passionately irascible temperament of the young genius from which he could infer that this Buonarroti and he, Julius, were fundamentally kindred natures. Julius too was passionate and hot-tempered; the incident of the painter Granacci, who had broken Michelangelo's nose in fury at a malicious word, might have happened to Julius himself, of whom it was related that at times he soundly caned his cardinals in measureless rage. So that wondrous young Florentine could also arouse hatred? So much the better! Such natures the pope loved quite particularly, for he hated nothing so much as lukewarmness. Such people as Michelangelo, in his opinion, belonged in Rome.

And so Julius sent a call for Michelangelo. He was to come at once. Money for the journey went with the call. How he should occupy him at first, to be sure, the pope did not know. Well, he would surely find a task that was worthy of the young Titan, and he immediately gave him an assignment which would have sufficed for twelve ordinary artists.

Michelangelo was to design a tomb for the pope, a work worthy of the great Julius. A detached monument three stories high, unexampled in dimensions as

in outlay. No matter what it cost. Money should not be grudged; so soon as Michelangelo needed anything, he was to come without previous announcement: access to the papal apartment was free to him at all times. Did the pope, did Michelangelo, we wonder, ever realize that the task as it was set and as it was planned would require the labor of a dozen artists and a lifetime besides? Almost forty supernormal figures were to adorn the structure! But for the pope the plan was soon inadequate in scope. Michelangelo was to find a suitable place where the tomb should stand. In the reconstructed church of St. Peter? Admirable! Then the new cathedral would be the real monument, and the detached tomb only a small section of the whole memorial. Julius always had boundless plans. So too the plan of the new church of St. Peter, which was to replace the old basilica, hallowed by more than a thousand years, required at least a lifetime for its completion; in fact, the execution took over a hundred years. But the pope wanted to see everything completed before his death. Rapid work! After a few days Michelangelo was already on his way to the marble quarries of Carrara. In eight months the blocks had been quarried. Some were roughly hewn on the spot. Ship-load after ship-load sailed away to Rome. When Michelangelo returned to Rome in January, 1506, the space between Santa Catharina and St. Peter's looked like a stone-quarry. The Romans passed by in veritable throngs to stare at these huge blocks of marble. Workmen from Florence arrived. The pope had a drawbridge constructed from his apartment to the studio, so that he might visit the artist undisturbed and as often as he pleased.

Then, all at once, the affair came to a standstill. The payments ceased. Michelangelo had to borrow from Jacopo Galli, his former patron, merely to satisfy the workmen. Four times he tried to speak with the pope, but each time he was rebuffed; finally in such a drastic manner that he could not but see that the pope wished to humiliate him. Had not Julius said a few days before, at a banquet, to a jeweller who offered him jewels for sale, with plain allusion to the monument: "I will have no more to do with stones, not with little ones, nor with great." That was plain. Something had happened, no man knew exactly what. Had Bramante, the architect of St. Peter's, really feared that his dangerous young rival might supplant him in the favor of the pope, and had he instigated some intrigue in the papal household? We do not know for sure.

If tyrannical capriciousness was a characteristic of the unstable pope, immeasurable pride was the badge of Michelangelo's nature. For the first time in the history of modern art, in him we have to do with an artist who felt himself, with respect to the lords of this earth, not as a servant but an equal. There is nothing magniloquent to be found in Michelangelo's behavior, such as we find later in the Baroque period, for example in the cavalier Bernini; but rather a firmness and grandeur which is all the more imposing that it appears in this form for the first time in history. In the hearing of all, Michelangelo says bluntly to the chamberlain who refuses him admission: "Then say to the pope that if he need me in future he may seek me where I am to be found." (The governor of Florence was probably correct when he later criticised Michelangelo's behavior

in these words: "You treated the pope in a manner such as the king of France had not dared to employ.") A few weeks later Michelangelo is back in Florence, having resumed his interrupted work on the battle-painting. The pope raves with anger; writes three successive letters to the government of Florence, demanding imperiously the extradition of the faithless, insolent knave; leaves no doubt that if they do not at once transport him to Rome, he will come to fetch him with fire and sword. The governor of Florence goes to see the young sculptor, just barely thirty years old, tries to influence him, points out that they surely do not wish to go to war on his account. Michelangelo does not stir. In the last resort he had in his pocket a call to the court of the sultan, for whom he was to build a bridge from Constantinople to Pera.

Meanwhile, political events had transpired which turned the pope's attention in other directions. A military expedition was sent against Bologna; the pope took the city. Of course he must now have a memorial of his glory, a bronze statue above the main portal of San Petronio, the cathedral of Bologna. There was but one who could execute the work in accordance with the pope's dream of it, and that was Michelangelo. And the pope writes once more to the government of Florence. This time benevolently, quite meekly. If Buonarroti would come to Bologna, the pope would be deeply glad; the past was completely forgiven and forgotten.

And again an interesting scene: Michelangelo in the palace of Julius at Bologna. (He had not gone there gladly, that is certain!) A cardinal would fain act the mediator—where there was of course nothing to mediate

—and therefore turns to the pope with courteously gentle smile: His Holiness might be pleased not to take too seriously the transgression of an uneducated man, for every one knew that this artist-rabble had no education and no manners. He did not get far with his patronizing *plaidoyer*. "You dare," the pope thundered at the cardinal, "to say to this man things that I myself would not have dared to tell him? You are yourself a man without education, *you* a wretched fellow, not he!" And had servants throw the dumfounded cleric out of the room.

That was the end of the conflict between the liegelord of Christendom and his sculptor. Michelangelo had won the victory. A picture of the Renaissance without which one would have difficulty in understanding what Michelangelo's never-flagging will, his autocratic spirit, his impulsive energy, meant for the development of art.

But one must also look at the other side—the tragedy that inheres in the fact that that will was never to realize its dreams, that he might never finish, but only plan, and must ultimately resign himself to abandoning everything to his more or less incompetent pupils.

What became of the gigantic plan of a tomb for Julius? When the pope died, nothing had been accomplished. Julius had a new project every day. Michelangelo was to do this, he was to do that. Nothing was farther from the understanding of the pope than the deep truth of the proverb "slow and sure wins the race." The administrators of the papal estate make a new contract with Michelangelo: the detached tomb is now to be a mural tomb, decidedly more modest than

the original design. Then the plan is cut down a second time; a third and fourth plan show the progressive shrinkage of the great project. And at last, when Michelangelo has become an old man, he abandons the plan altogether, turns it over to his pupils. Not in the Julian basilica, which of course was originally conceived as the resplendent repository of the monument, but in St. Peter *in vincoli* is erected a miserable wall-tomb—let us frankly admit it—a rank atrocity. Impossible in its proportions, pitiful in its details. Of the figures of the first plan, almost forty in number, only a single original creation of Michelangelo's hand is incorporated in the tomb—the "Moses." Insufferable, the effect of this figure, intended to be viewed from all sides, and now jammed into a niche that is far too small for it. Meaningless works of Michelangelo's pupils are set up to right and left. Let us say nothing of the sarcophagus with the recumbent figure of the pope, high up and much too small, which is lugged in like an emergency bridge over a chasm. Of the other figures that originally belonged to the tomb, two went to Paris—the celebrated "slaves." The four "Prigionieri," probably the most titanic work that any sculptor ever conceived or shaped, have lately been transferred to the Academy at Florence, after they had dragged out a grotesquely pitiful existence for centuries, built into the stalactite caves of the gardens behind the Pitti palace.

Also the mortuary chapel of the Medici in Florence, the next most ambitiously planned work of the master, had a similar fate. In the original plan, even more grandiose than the first design for the tomb of Julius, there had been planned a concurrent employment of architecture, plastic art, and pictorial decoration of

which the like had never been seen: a colossal, massive, cube-shaped structure, adorned on four sides with mural tombs, in the centre of a square chapel overarched by a bright dome, the architectural structure of whose walls was to repeat as by an echo the rhythm of the cubic monument standing detached in the middle. In the first subsequent design the idea of the detached central tomb was abandoned and the graves were apportioned to the four walls. After further very protracted alteration, only two of the tombs finally reached completion; and worse than that, the disposition of the half-finished plastic constituents and the execution of the architectonic space was turned over to pupils. The divers external grounds for this tragic mutilation of an incomparably grandiose plan cannot be gone into here. Suffice it to say that what we see in Florence to-day is still tremendous, but it is no longer the unsullied conception of Michelangelo, and if we attempt to reconstruct from the recovered designs the idea that was originally in his mind, we come to the realization that the Medici chapel, as it exists to-day, is also but a faint reflection of far greater splendor, a compromise.

Almost all that we have of Michelangelo's work to-day is fragments; bits torn out of the great organic sequences for which they were designed and in which alone they would reveal the inward significance of their form. All his creation remained as plans, sketches, compromises.

With one exception. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel alone proclaims to-day the whole glory of Michelangelo; it stands there precisely as he had planned it. He himself conceived and executed in person not only that stupendous ceiling, whereby he opened up

new paths for entire generations of painters, but also the "Last Judgment." But is it not true, if we reflect deeply upon it, that this very fact brings out most clearly the tragedy of Michelangelo? How he had at first rebelled against executing the commission given him by Julius! Again and again he had responded to the insistent urging of the pope: "I am a sculptor. Painting is not my trade." And when he finally yielded, what was the result? Is this world of bodies, and bodies, and bodies once again, about which there is not one leaf, not a bit of landscape, no atmosphere, indeed not even the smallest trace of ornamental vegetation upon which the eye might rest . . . is it not the gigantic dream of a sculptor, who could think only as a sculptor, and who, because he was not permitted to execute it in marble, let the whole immense accumulation of his inner vision burst forth in a veritable lava-stream of painted imitations of sculpture? The destiny of art in that age rested, as was shown in the first chapter, in the hands of painting. Michelangelo bound up with it the destiny of sculpture as no other has done; but what he completed persisted as painting. Since his day there is nothing but sculptural painting, at least in Rome and central Italy. There can be no doubt: a sculptural sculpture would have been purer and more effective. But we first gain a full consciousness of the real tragedy when we ask ourselves: what would have come forth out of Michelangelo's imagination if he had chanced to live in the age of Alexander the Great, in the heyday of a highly developed plastic art that was trammelled by no dominance of painting, and not in the sixteenth century when all other arts had to bow down and worship that of painting?

In the basic depths of his nature Michelangelo was first and last a sculptor. He never wearied of asserting that he had imbibed sculpturehood with his mother's milk. Condivi, his first biographer, narrates this quite naïvely, pointing out that his mother chose as nurse for him, shortly after his birth, the wife of a stonemason. In reality, the explanation lies elsewhere. His sculpturehood is racially derived; it is the blood of the old stock of Etruscan sculptors that lives on in this greatest son of Tuscany. Winckelmann, the art-historian and friend of Goethe, had recognized that with his keen insight; he writes in the third chapter of his *History of Ancient Art:* "The peculiarities of the Etruscan style are still visible in the works of their descendants and are revealed to the unprejudiced eye of the expert especially in the drawing of Michelangelo." This unobtrusive racial bond is also probably the reason why the Florentines always really understood their fellow countrymen better than the Romans. And it is touching to see how the Florentines—regardless of the petty personal friction and political irritations which had now and then somewhat clouded the good relations between the parties—joined hands, when need was, about the great Tuscan; above all when he was to be escorted to his last rest.

At the command of the pope, Buonarroti had once gone to Rome as a young man. Here he had gathered his first laurels, from here had gone out his immense influence; he stamped upon Rome the artistic impress of his personality, which she still bears. But again and again he had felt drawn back to Florence. There, he felt, was his true home. And it was there that he wished to find his last resting-place. Now when he died in

Rome, almost ninety years old, the Romans wished to retain his body as a precious relic. But Florence would not be robbed of him. Even after the official funeral celebration had taken place in Rome, the Florentine residents in Rome carried off his body and smuggled the coffin as merchandise across the border under cover of darkness and fog. When the coffin arrived in Florence, no one in the city knew anything about it. But the rumor soon sped from house to house, and when the pall-bearers issued from the church of San Pietro Maggiore, intending to transport their priceless burden quite unobtrusively to Santa Croce, they found outside a countless throng of persons standing shoulder to shoulder, who followed the coffin through the night without a sound. The multitude grew and grew; like a silent sea it surged into the vast church, and when the body was finally lifted into the sarcophagus, the throng was so great that it was impossible to close the tomb.

II

When we said above that Michelangelo was a sculptor and only a sculptor, the intent was that this should be understood in its deepest significance. The accidental circumstance that one man is a specialist of the chisel, a second a specialist of the brush, or a third a specialist of the graver, has fundamentally little to do with the particular shaping of the artistic thinking of any given artist. The only thing that matters is the fundamental point of view.

Michelangelo could think only in sculptural forms, even when he bowed to the art-will of his time and made paintings. And precisely because this sculptor

had to paint, he became—let us not blink the fact!—fateful for the later art of central Italy. The further course of the development of art-history will be left without explanation of its most essential problems if we do not clarify our thinking as to the entire bearing of the fact that Michelangelo, the chosen leader of his age and his native land, was in his conceptions, feeling, and thinking not a painter but a sculptor.

A glance at the fifteenth century and a further one at the development of European art down to the present shows us that painting was to retain in the future the unconditionally dominant position which it had won during the fifteenth century. The fact that sculpture and architecture did not cease to produce beautiful and important works will not drive out of existence the other fact that after 1400 painting carried to an ever-increasing degree the leading melody in the symphony of art-development. When we speak of modern "art," we think of the painters, of Titian, Tintoretto, El Greco, Velazquez, Rubens, Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Delacroix, the Impressionists. Nobody, unless he were a specialist in sculpture, would mention instead of these such names as Bernini, Puget, Bouchardon, Rodin, or Maillol. This specifically pictorial development had set in during the fifteenth century with the discovery of light, atmosphere, and color. Landscape-painting, which was born at that time, is in a sense the symbol of that art. Michelangelo hurled this steady development out of its course with one blow—at least as far as central Italy, hitherto the leading province—was concerned. To be sure, powerful as was this most titanic artistic personality of his age, he did not succeed in simply supplanting painting as such by sculpture; but he could only

express completely his essential sculptural designs in that art which corresponded to the art-will of the time, namely painting. But since all stylistic evolution reveals itself as the result of an interaction or a counteraction of the universal art-will on the one hand, and the artist-personality on the other hand, hence the result of the encroachment of the sculptural personality of Michelangelo upon the pictorial art-will of the Renaissance is quite clear: precisely because this most creative personality of the age maintained from first to last an exclusively sculptural point of view, whereas the art-will was dominantly pictorial, Michelangelo's sculptural mode of thinking and ideation was bound to effect a decisive transformation in the language of contemporary painting. Painters of inferior creative ability, people who could only imitate, adopted his mannerisms. The final result was, as I pointed out at the end of the preceding chapter, that most deplorable epoch of "statue-painting," through which the sixteenth-century painting of central Italy strayed into a blind alley from which it has never quite extricated itself.

In order to interpret, on the basis of its innermost essence, the rôle which Michelangelo's art played in the history of art, we must first attempt a definition, more specific than the rather general and loose one given in our first chapter, of that which is to be understood by "sculptural thinking and ideation" as antithetical to the frame of mind of the artist who is purely a painter. Leonardo, in his *Treatise on Painting*, may perhaps help us to find the trail. "Sculpture," he writes, "is content with the simple proportions of the members and with the nature of movements and

positions, and so she is at an end, and reveals to the eye *what* exists *as* it exists. She occasions the observer, therefore, not the least wonderment, as does the art of painting, which creates upon a plane surface by virtue of her knowledge [at another time he says, "by virtue of her consummate artistic sagacity"] the illusion of wide-spread fields and distant horizons."

Indeed this is the fundamental distinction between the two arts, particularly during the Renaissance. Painting was the art of illusionizing the wide world. It could juxtapose and imitate every imaginable thing, even the most intangible and evanescent, the atmosphere, the light. The sculptor is excluded from all that. In the last analysis, he knows only one subject for representation, the human body.

Viewed in this connection, that which some wished to be regarded as the advance brought about by Michelangelo might indeed appear at the first glance as an enormous impoverishment of the richly varied art of the fifteenth century. Any one who knows that lovingly detailed depiction of the "Shame of Noah" which Benozzo Gozzoli painted in the Campo Santo at Pisa during the sixties of the fifteenth century (17) will admit that Michelangelo's conception of the same subject on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (1508) (18) defrauded the older painting of everything of which it was justly proud. Of the lovely autumn day and of the vineyards of the Patriarch, idyllically situated in the hills, of the contemplative, cheerful depiction of country life, of the flowers, birds, dogs, and cats, nothing is left but the bare wall of a shed against which there stands out in grandiose clarity a powerful group of nudes that fills the entire space: the three sons, who

17. BENOZZO GOZZOLI

The Shame of Noah, *ca.* 1460, Pisa, Campo Santo.

are spreading a cloth over the nakedness of the mighty form of old Noah, lying heavily on the ground; of rural life nothing but the figure of a man digging. The whole thing would indeed be worthy—if executed in stone—of adorning one of the metopes of the Parthenon. It is

18. MICHELANGELO
The Shame of Noah, 1508, Rome, Ceiling of Sistine Chapel.

painted sculpture. And even to-day we can trace in the work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling how during the execution Michelangelo's art-will turned away from the traditional conception of painting as a detailed, illusionistic depiction of the world and the objects in it to the sculptural conception peculiar to himself. The "Flood," which stands at the beginning of the series, is at least a leisurely, comparatively circumstantial account. A hill is shown at the left, on which the unending throng of fugitives, ascending rearwards out of the

depths, seek protection from the flood, which is portrayed on the other side, likewise in a quite circumstantial landscape manner. In the following pictures there is no longer anything similar. The Garden of Eden in the "Fall of Man and the Expulsion from Paradise" is already reduced to nothing but a desolate horizontal strip of ground, a tree, and a few barren rocks. The whole thing is reduced to its symbolical elements: two wonderfully expressive groups. And from the "Creation of Adam" on, the human figure dominates absolutely. Also, it becomes larger from picture to picture, and soon fills the available space to such an extent that ultimately the restriction in the number of figures—of course conditioned by the peculiarity of the Biblical narrative—appears to be an inevitable necessity. The three figures in the "Creation of Eve" seem calculated to burst apart the box-like frame. God the Father must keep his head bowed, so as not to strike the top of it. In the picture which constitutes the completion of the entire cycle, "The Division of Light and Darkness," the only figure shown, that of God the Father, is depicted only in half-length. The painting sculptor thought he need make but a single motif, that of physical torsion, boom through the entire surface of the picture. (25.)

So long as the body signified for the sculptor nothing but a model that called for correct reproduction—as had actually been the case in the fifteenth century—Leonardo was justified in saying that sculpture exhausted its possibilities in representing "*what* exists *as* it exists," and that there it came to an end. Also he was fully justified in seeing therein a limitation of its media, whereby it showed itself inferior to the in-

finitely more resourceful art of painting. Had Leonardo known the later works of Michelangelo, he would presumably have altered his judgment.

Michelangelo too knows only the body as the sole subject of his art. But the great and novel fact is that for him the body has ceased to be merely a model, merely an object for reproduction. What Michelangelo sees in the human form is rather the bearer, the interpreter of spiritual things. The human body and its power-functions evolve under his hands into an instrument which is played upon by his soul-searching, soul-revealing imagination. It is then not the correct, characteristic reproduction of a face, or the appropriate simulation of a satiny skin, that interests him. Nor indeed any phase of the external description of that which exists. The body is merely the means to an end, it is the organ, not the fugue. He recognizes that in which sculpture is superior to painting. He does not rival painting, he does not strive for any of its illusionism, and thus he finds in the natural limitations of sculpture, which Leonardo regarded as its weakness, the true source of its strength.

Painting knows only the surface as an "instrument." Upon a surface it can design an expressive pattern.[1] Michelangelo recognizes for the first time in its fullest scope the deep significance for plastic art of the three-dimensional character of space, and opens up in turn for that art, as the peculiarly spatial type, an

[1] In his *Treatise on Painting* Leonardo gives as a painter advice to painters-in-training as to how one can stimulate the imagination to the production of such surface-patterns: "Heed not lightly this my opinion, in which I advise you that it should not appear tedious to you to stand still at times and gaze upon spots on the wall or upon the ashes in the fire, or into the clouds, or into the mire, or upon other such spots; you will, if you do but contemplate them aright, disclose very wondrous dis-

inexhaustible spring of all sculptural motifs, which had been filled up with débris during the age of pure naturalism. He discovers the rich possibilities of "spatial patterns" (if it is permissible to create such a term by analogy with the expression "surface pattern"): the manifold types of axes in space, inward and outward motion, a wealth of spatial contrasts, and the possibility of treating these like the polyphonic strains of a musical composition, interweaving them rhythmically and melodically.

Discoveries which were to open up such mighty and novel possibilities of expression naturally crystallized only gradually into shape during long years of creative effort, they were not present in his art from the beginning. Their evolution constitutes the major phase in the development of Michelangelo's art.

When Michelangelo created his early work, the "Madonna of Bruges" (20), his artistic ideation was still fast bound in surface-concepts. His unmistakable advance over the plastic art of the *Quattrocento* lies in the greater seriousness of mind, in the tone, in the uplifted, stern solemnity of the mood. It is that which distinguishes such a work from the every-day, commoner character of *Quattrocento* plastic art. Out of Benedetto da Maiano's Mother (19), who plays with her little boy and at the same time flirts with the public, Michelangelo made a deeply solemn queen. The formally erect bearing, averse to all playfulness, emphasized by the

coveries therein. If so be you have a situation to invent, then you can behold there things which resemble divers landscapes, decked out with mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, great plains, hills, and dales of manifold kind. So too can you see all manner of battles there, animated postures of strangely wrought figures, facial expressions, costumes, and countless matters that you may put into perfect and good shape. In the matter of such walls, one makes such an observation as in the peal of bells: you will be able to find again in their tones any name and any word that you think of."

severe lines in the disposition of the garment folds, replaces the but little composed mood in which Maiano's Madonna appears to be. Otherwise there is nothing basically new in this work of Michelangelo.

19. BENEDETTO DA MAIANO

Virgin and Child. Terra-cotta, *ca.* 1480, Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

20. MICHELANGELO

The Madonna of Bruges, *ca.* 1500, Bruges, St. Mary's Church.

But in the "Medici Madonna" (21), created about twenty-five years later, the entire expression is transferred to the spatial rhythms. The expression of the face now signifies little or nothing as compared with the music of the spatial play of the limbs. With natu-

ralistic criteria one simply cannot get at the essence of such a work. Whoso should try to regard this sculpture as a bit of Nature transferred to marble, and nothing

21. MICHELANGELO
Medici Madonna, *ca.* 1520, Florence, San Lorenzo, Sagrestia nuova.

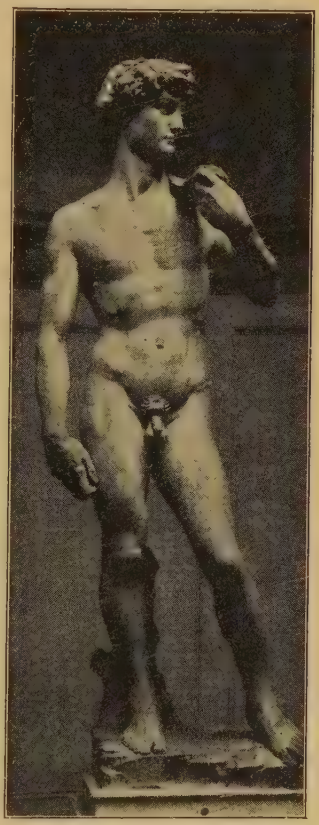
further, could only observe with regret that the solemnly sustained earnestness of the "Madonna of Bruges" has given way to a restless, artificial behavior of mother and child, indeed that everything in the bearing of this

woman and this child is the opposite of simplicity and calm. Thus, how are the two sitting? The mother with her legs crossed, the torso bent forward with a twist that brings the right arm far to the rear, the left arm directly forward. The child shows even greater torsion, almost like a screw. He sits astride on one of his mother's knees, his breast, like hers, facing the beholder. In order to reach her breast from this position, the child has to turn his head backward, so that his right arm intersects her body in very complicated fashion. Most unlike a child, and impractical besides, one will say; would it not have been simpler to turn the child the other way to start with?

But how silly must this type of criticism seem to one who has once recognized that it is precisely by means of the mutually opposing spiral-motifs of mother and child that a wealth of axial contrasts and spatial relations is attained with which nothing, absolutely nothing, in previous plastic art can be remotely compared. The "Madonna of Bruges," viewed from the side, affords unsatisfying prospects, because it is only in the front view that it furnishes a unified silhouette, and in this view its wealth of form is completely exhausted. One must walk around the "Medici Madonna"; only then can the veritably inexhaustible music of the space-piercing axes be apprehended. And yet the impression of utmost calm is insured by the fact that each contrast, each one of the varying prospects, is held together by the uniformly unbroken, restful outline. The massiveness of the original marble block has been preserved, is fundamentally latent, as it were, in the total plastic impression. Here we understand what Michelangelo meant by the saying: "The statue is

contained in the stone from the beginning in its finished state, and is merely laid bare by the chisel, as one strips the husk from the kernel."

The development of sculpture under Michelangelo, formally considered, signified the replacement of pictorial two-dimensionality by the complete penetration of space. How flat and board-like, only enjoyable at all in a pure front view, is even his "David" (1503), and how all-sided, how space-filling and space-animating is his so-called "Apollo" (about 1530)!



22. MICHELANGELO
David, 1503, Florence, Accademia delle belle arti.

The effect which the David (22) exerts upon the beholder is still almost exclusively conditioned by that which might just as well have gone into a painting: by "*what* exists *as* it exists" (to repeat the above-cited definition of Leonardo). Mimicry and gesture tell the whole story. The keen glance, fixed on its objective, the resolutely drawn brows, the wrinkled forehead . . . all this is observed with the accuracy of a model-study, and the effect is based upon the exact reproduction of Nature. The model, who may have been a good actor, speaks through his marble image, as it were—though it remains for the

nonce wholly indifferent whether Michelangelo actually copied a model or whether he simply invented the entire figure and its expression. So too in the admirably reproduced body it is more the imitation of Nature that speaks to us than the essence of the space or any other purely sculptural element.

In the "Apostle Matthew" (1504) (23), which was started shortly afterward but left unfinished, Michelangelo is already treading paths that deviate wholly from the current tradition. The expressional effect of this figure has no longer anything to do with the looks of the model or with any incident on which the statue is based. A violent sideward twist of the head, so that it appears in pure profile above the wholly forward-looking torso, prepared for in the contrast of a flexed left arm with a relaxed right one, as also in the artificial differentiation of the two legs, one of which is drawn up; in other words, the force with which the joints function in opposite directions: this is evidently all that interested the sculptor in this particular work.

No one will be able to resist the suspicion that Michelangelo was trying to express some very definite idea by means of such rhythms of the limbs, and that he deviated from the tradition of mere "representation" of a model or of a robed lay-figure simply because he could not express with the old means what he wished to convey.

And how could it have been otherwise? Has a really great artist ever created shapes merely for the sake of the shapes themselves? Has not the intent to impart some spiritual idea always forced him to formulate his creation solely in terms of the language that is appropriate for him? He said himself: "The greatest artist can conceive nothing that the marble block does not

already bear within it, hidden from the surface, from which it was separated by superfluous stone. But only the hand that is obedient to the intellect can penetrate

23. MICHELANGELO
St. Matthew, 1504, Florence, Accademia delle belle arti.

24. MICHELANGELO
Slave, *ca.* 1515, Paris, Louvre.

to the figure in the deeps of the stone." How that is to be understood may be made clear to us by one of the "Slaves" (about 1515) in the Louvre, originally intended for the tomb of Julius. (24.)

It has been said that this figure represents a youth at the moment of being overcome by sleep. That is possible. Hopeless is the rebellion of the youth against the violence of tyranny; whether that be sleep or some other symbolic power. The whole figure is revolt and defeat. The right leg still sustains the body, and the left arm is lifted high, in order to support with downward grasp of the hand the head as it sinks backward. Also in the uplifted right shoulder one traces the resolve to overcome its own irresolution; but the corresponding hand, which has but now found support on the band across the breast, is already yielding, slipping down. Also the left leg is about to collapse. The "happening" is in itself of so indefinite a character, being rather universally symbolic, that it is made easy for us here to recognize in the rhythm of the sculptural totality the mirror of the event. Upon longer contemplation one is bound to feel clearly how the movement as a whole reveals itself as a fountain: a vertical uprush, a bending of the stream at the apex, a languid, frequently interrupted return to the earth. In an S-curve rises the line from the presented right foot, ascending into the uplifted left arm; from thence it glides down again on the other side: over the head, into the upper right arm; once more upward—the lower arm guides the eye to the hand in the middle of the breast; but with the downward slipping fingers of that hand we again sink into the irresistible "down" that is completed in the collapsing left leg. The unhewn bit of marble support at the base, remotely recalling a breaking wave, gives in its rhythm a repetition and to a certain degree the key to the movement as a whole.

The deepest root from which grows the aptitude for

such symbolical expression-rhythms lies of course in the enormously delicate sensitiveness of the artist to the human body as such. Had not the two gone hand in hand, the will to remould space, and a feeling for the expression-values of form in space, and still more, if the two had not been constantly and repeatedly checked up with the natural movements of the body, Michelangelo's art would be nothing but empty formalism. He alone might venture this tremendous advance into an unexampled mode of plastic expression, for no one in that day possessed a deeper insight into the human organism, nor had any one a deeper relation to the symbolism of human expressive motion.

III

Until recently the feeling for the symbolical value of bodily movement, and therewith also the key to the proper understanding of Michelangelo's expression, had been lost. What has restored to us our sensitiveness to this, at least to a certain degree, is the modern eurythmic dance, the "plastic" dance, as it was first developed by Isadora Duncan and then above all by the school of Jacques Dalcroze. The expressive dance, of course, also has no other means of symbolizing moods than the rhythmically disposed movement of the limbs. This has once more taught us to recognize and distinguish how, let us say, a body relaxed in all its limbs, as it were redeemed from all repressions, can express a glad unrestraint, a body repressed in all its joints a deadening restraint.

In the twenty naked youths crowning the prophetic thrones on the Sistine ceiling, therefore, we recognize

to-day more than merely well-studied and masterfully executed nudes. Their motion speaks to us once more as the purposeful expression of definite, basic spiritual moods, and the harmony of each group of four—four encompass each of the central spaces (25)—affects us somewhat like the the movement of a sonata. The tempo changes, from *Largo sostenuto* to *Presto agitato*, or, in other words, from solemn passivity to dionysiac abandon.

Here too the attempt at a naturalistic interpretation would lead to trivial results. The "action" portrayed, the actual "motif"—the boys are holding the opposite ends of garlands and ribbons—scarcely offers an occasion worth mentioning for the complex and often positively unnatural poses. For the interpretation everything depends rather on the apprehension of the collective rhythm, which results from the intensity of the articular functions, from the harmonic polyphony of the limbs, now flexed, now relaxed, now revealed to the eye in simple profile, now in foreshortening. (26, 27.) The total outline in a given case—here light-footed and supple, there tenacious and heavy—encompasses each figure like a symbolic pattern, to whose interpretation our own articular consciousness, our own personal motor-sensations, afford the key.

There are youths who perform the task like a game, and others who fairly collapse under the burden of a wreath; in one case both the outline and all the limbs are fluttering, in another all the functions are restrained, and an almost unarticulated silhouette then trammels the weary body like an unbreakable chain. The slaves to right and left of the prophet Ezekiel afford examples of unprecedented poses. One stretches out his right

25. MICHELANGELO

The Division of Light and Darkness, and four Nudes, 1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

26. MICHELANGELO
Nude, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

27. MICHELANGELO
Nude, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

arm between his outspread thighs until it touches the ground, so that the result is three vertical lines side by side, in another the two legs and the left arm lie close together as three diagonals. The fusing of four nudes about each central picture into one composition follows the principle of symmetrical correspondence in the earlier of these groups, in the later ones the principle is relaxed more and more, until it is finally replaced by an apparently asymmetrical planlessness. Here are to be sought those inventions that seem to be most heavily charged with expressive energy. (25.)

The Prophets and Sibyls cannot possibly be interpreted on any other basis than that of our subjective bodily motor-sensations. Michelangelo's complete grasp of the human organism and his mastery of lucid draftsmanship, which compels every limb to give its unambiguous message, bring it about that such elementary matters as bodily posture and gesture, the simple turning of a head, or the lifting of an arm, strike us directly and with uncanny force, like a high-powered electric current.

The motif underlying these pictures is again marked by a character so unassuming as to border on the trivial: to read or to have been reading in a book, to return a book to the shelf, or to take down a book from it. Also the costumes are now innocent of the elegant and brilliant display that the *Quattrocento* loved to employ in such cases. Men and women sitting on thrones as allegories were of course painted or represented in plastic form through the whole fifteenth century. The Virtues of Pollaiuolo and Botticelli in Florence, the seven Liberal Arts which Melozzo da Forli had painted for the Duke of Urbino in collaboration

with Josse van Ghent, the Sibyls and Prophets of Filippino Lippi on the ceiling of the Capella Caraffa in Santa Maria sopra Minerva at Rome (28), offer examples enough; one should compare these with Michelangelo's

28. FILIPPINO LIPPI

The Delphic Sibyl, 1489, Rome, Ceiling of Caraffa Chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva.

solution of the problem in order to appreciate to the full the complete novelty of his conception and execution.

He did not wish, like those others, to create traditional allegories. We could interpret these characters even without the titular designations that Michelangelo retained in accordance with the custom of the

fifteenth century. Nor would they really need the reading of the prophetic and sibylline books. These persons speak through themselves. The Prophets of the Old Testament and the Sibyls lived in Michelangelo's conception as beings of a peculiar character, deeply and spiritually grounded; he saw in them representatives of an inwardly great human type. And whatever of such ideas lived in his soul, that knew and understood man inside and out, this he wished to embody in portraits of those foretellers of Christ. Not in portraits of the traditional sort, not studied in every facial detail from some model. Much more universally and comprehensively did he wish to draw upon his sculptor's soul for these types. Everything accidental must be done away. They were to be, in Plato's sense, primitive, eternal ideas of the various human character-complexes; expressed and set forth in their totality with no other means than those which his sculptural thinking put into his hands: bodily posture, gesture, rhythm of outline.

It is advisable to analyze the figures by the method of comparing opposites.

The "Delphic Sibyl" (29): a young, heroically proportioned woman of regular, truly Apollinic beauty. The bared arms, the bared throat show the supple play of her muscles. Each of her movements is performed rapidly but gracefully. Everything about her is completely balanced.

Sitting wholly in profile, she had just been reading in a parchment scroll when a voice from the distance touched her ear. An abrupt twist of the head—and the visionary, wide-open eyes are fastened on the spot whence the voice comes. The right arm has released the scroll and dropped into her lap, while the left still

29. MICHELANGELO
The Delphic Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

30. MICHELANGELO
The Persian Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

31. MICHELANGELO

The Cumæan Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

holds the other end of the scroll uplifted, just as it was holding it when the call came. Only a wide-awake temperament is so elastic in its reactions. The harmony which lends its stamp to this character is also echoed in the formal disposition. Although not one inch of superfluous space is left, the body fills the throne without the least cramping. How powerfully expressive are the primary lines: the vertical of the purely frontal face over the horizontals of the throne and the uplifted arm. The unbroken sweep of the wind-blown mantle to the right might have had a massive and heavy effect; the jagged irregularity of the answering outline on the left side balances this effect, and gives suppleness and grace to the whole. No dissonance is tolerated here.

A wholly different world opens to us with the "Persian Sibyl" (30), who with averted face, almost wholly veiled in shadow, reads in her thin book like a near-sighted person. A lean, bony giantess, almost too tall for the throne of which she touches the upper line, although her head is lowered between her shoulders. The shaded silhouette of this face recalls the fantastically jagged peaks of a crag after sundown. This is no untrammelled, open soul; everything about her is veiled, mysterious, almost ghostly. The high-necked dress, which envelops the arms down to the wrists, and the heavy mantle drag sluggishly. The illumination is electrically pregnant; the light is placed far below, but the shadows cluster on high like black clouds. Far below the head of the Sibyl, demons silently slink into the darkness.

Again a different character: the Herculean woman called the "Cumæan Sibyl" (31). Michelangelo has imagined this aged person as a monstrously massive

32. MICHELANGELO
The Libyan Sibyl, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

creature with the muscular arms of a blacksmith. Each of her forms is equally uncouth and clumsy, nothing about her is supple. The legs stand parallel to each other like two pillar-stumps, undifferentiated in their positions. The outline is as viscous as if made of clay. Also the accompanying genii are of the same sluggish race. Strange to say, in the visions of "Hermas" (an apocryphal New Testament apocalypse which was widely read in the fifteenth century) the "Cumæan Sibyl" is explicitly described as an aged woman reading in a *little* book. To preserve the unity of the total conception Michelangelo has put into her hands a folio which is so heavy that the prophetess prefers to let it rest on the arm of her throne; in such fists, to be sure, no little book would be appropriate.

Like the personification of the gayest, most playful grace appears the "Libyan Sibyl" (32). She is more of this world than of that other. She is in the act of laying a book on the shelf behind her the while with light step—she merely touches the ground with the tips of her toes—she descends from her throne. As she turns her head over her shoulder at the same time, as if she were contemplating the life of the chapel beneath, her entire body is contorted in an indescribably charming fashion. The mood of a Bacchic dance surrounds her. One would not be surprised to see the *thyrsus* in her hand. While the *putti* on the throne-shelf to right and left are already interlocked for the dance, the two boyish genii behind the throne, following the example of their mistress, are hasting away. In correspondence with the festive heightening of tone and rhythm of this *Allegro con brio* Michelangelo has devoted special pains to the costume. The whole upper part of the body is

33. MICHELANGELO
The Prophet Isaiah, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

34. MICHELANGELO
The Prophet Jonah, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel

nude, and the mantle, as if presaging the dance, flings itself over her knee.

It would take us too far, if we were to analyze all the Sibyls. Similarly, we may emphasize but a few points with respect to the Prophets.

Male characters evidently came more naturally to Michelangelo than female ones, and it may be presumed that the preparatory studies for the Sibyls—we happen to know this definitely in the case of the Libyan —were drawn from male models. There may be some connection with this in the fact that he manages to create finer nuances in the characters of the Prophets than in those of the Sibyls.

That which was depicted in the "Delphic Sibyl" with elemental simplicity—the same condition of a sudden auditory attentiveness—is made visible in the penetrating psychological study of "Isaiah" (33) as something much more differentiated: an introspective listening, not an outward one. In a pose of complete inactivity—the feet crossed, the right hand in the closed book—the Prophet had just been reflecting on what he had read. He had leaned his head on the left arm, which was supported by the book. Then the voice called. The boy behind him shows from what direction. The voice comes like a wind, tosses up the cloak of the boy, and whispers in the mantle of the prophet. Isaiah raises his head, listens. Nothing else stirs. Even the hand which had just been supporting his head remains as if paralyzed. Also, the gaze of the prophet does not seek the place from which the voice proceeds. His lids have dropped for introspective contemplation, and the face takes on that remarkably absent expression which is wont to accompany introspective vision.

35. MICHELANGELO

The Prophet Jeremiah, 1508–1510, Rome, Sistine Chapel.

But "Jonah" (34) hurls himself backward in passionate fury. The tremendously violent diagonal affects us as if the structural limits of the throne were to be rent asunder. One single great gesture of revolt, at which the genii and the whale creep as it were into the corner: "I do well to be angry even unto death." (Jonah 4:9.)

In contrast to this passionateness, it is complete resignation, renunciation of all voluntary activity, the profoundest pessimism, that speaks from the "Jeremiah" (35), in whose features I should like to think that the master has given us his self-portrait. The throne-seat is so low that the man who squats upon it with crossed feet, in the working-smock of the sculptor, would find it hard to rise. The heavy hand hangs exhausted in his lap; the fingers are limp, volitionless, dead; a single fold of the mantle, which has thrust itself between them, is strong enough to push aside without effort three fingers of that muscular hand. Hopelessly the head bears down on the right hand. Passively the right arm burdens the knee. Nowhere an upward line; everywhere the force of gravity pulls downward. The silhouette creeps along with the heaviness of molten lead. Also the genii bow in sadness. A funeral march, in a dragging tempo and a minor key. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! . . . She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she has none to comfort her." (Lam. 1:1, 2.)

IV

The dense mass of bodies on the Sistine ceiling was and is—despite all the plastic feeling conjured into it —flat: pictorial illusion. When his work was done, Michelangelo may have felt something like a painful regret. Certainly, the unbroken flow, the symphonic stream of movement of the surface-pattern was tremendous; but how much greater would be the effectiveness of this in stone, if a plastic, space-filling billow were allowed to surge in and out, in other words, if the surface-pattern became a space-pattern.

About ten years later, an opportunity was afforded for carrying out such a plan.

In accordance with his stupendous artistic conception, the mortuary chapel of the Medici in San Lorenzo at Florence (36, 37) was nothing other than the fulfilment of an architectural space with interweaving streams of movement. Architectonic framework constituted as it were the bed, chiselled bodies the single waves. All three walls of the square, relatively small, overdomed chapel were to be covered with far-projecting mural tombs; a small choir in place of the fourth wall was retained for the altar. Of course the relations of the figure-borne movements to each other were not to be enacted, as on the Sistine ceiling, in a single plane, but to traverse the space in all directions. But even each single wall as such was to appear no longer as a mere plane surface. Michelangelo designs the architecture with constant reference to its bearing on the plastic features; architecture and sculpture interact and counteract. Where the wall retreats in niches, the figures press forward into the open space. Conventional custom demanded that

the niche should find its sole justification in housing the statues. Michelangelo puts an end to this practice.

36. MICHELANGELO

Tomb of Giuliano dei Medici, with the figures of Day and Night, 1521–1534, Florence, San Lorenzo, Sagrestia nuova.

He parts niche and statue. Figureless niches now reply to niche-freed figures. Even to-day, when only a feeble reflection of Michelangelo's grandiose plan remains, the

temperamental character of this incessant plastic vibration takes hold of us with almost brutal force.

Although only two of the mural tombs are executed

37. MICHELANGELO
Tomb of Lorenzo dei Medici, with the figures of Dawn and Twilight, 1521–1534, Florence.

on opposite walls, their mutual relation across the intervening space is unmistakably expressed in a spiral. The tomb of Giuliano dei Medici (36) and that of Lo-

renzo dei Medici (37) have exactly the same architectonic scheme. Detached from the wall and projecting forward into the central space stand the two sarcophagi. On the ends of their vaulted lids, at eye-level and held down by a horizontal ledge, two nude figures recline, in each case a man and a woman: the four divisions of the day. Above the sarcophagi the wall is divided into three high niches of rectangular shape. The corner niches (above the daytimes) are empty, the central niche (between them) contains the ideal figure of the deceased.

The identity of the structural scheme on the two sides compels us to refer to each other the antitheses which are expressed in the plastic figures. This interaction would only be wholly complete if we had today also the third wall-decoration, on which, according to the original plan, the dissonance of the two existing tombs was to be resolved into harmony.

The tomb of Lorenzo with the two figures of the dusk is wholly in a minor key. The entire expression is comparatively soft, almost nebulous; musically speaking, the movement is to be played *pianissimo e con sordini*. The shaded head and the pensive bearing of the duke (called by the people "*Il pensieroso*") gives the key-note. "Evening," a man sinking down in exhaustion (twilight: *crepusculo*, hence conceived as male); dawn (*aurora*), a woman who wakes no less exhausted and with an indescribably dragging gesture draws the veil from her face. Dulled muscles, wearied limbs; the bodies move very little into space, persist almost in one plane; also the silhouette strives for reserve, stillness.

To all this comes as response from the other side,

the tomb of Giuliano, a shrill *fortissimo* in a piercing major key. There sits the duke on his throne, ready to leap. Night and day—complete extinction and complete wakefulness of the will—are the symbols on the tomb. Muscles swelling with strength, flexed limbs, foreshortenings, violent overlappings have the floor. In a harsh torsion the "day" is about to roll over. Terrifying. Toward the beholder. The head rises from behind above the shoulders like the sun over a mountain.

Michelangelo's new style speaks in the Medici chapel only in expression-laden, quite sudden contrasts. Mediating transitions do not exist any more. *Fortissimo* follows abruptly upon *pianissimo*; black upon white; *crescendo*, *diminuendo*, *sfumato* are abolished. That is his late style, whose *terribiltà* was admired by his contemporaries. It is as if Michelangelo were no longer unfolding his thinking before us step by step, as formerly, but as if he were giving us merely the final results, the high points of his thinking. His expression is now laconic and goes to the limit of conciseness. Every word is so laden with content, as it were, that when one after another comes in quick succession, as here, it takes our breath away. All traditional art, placed beside this violently passionate mode of utterance, tastes flat and stale. Dissonance, with which one can speak more incisively than with mild harmony, is now triumphant. In it vibrates passion; it can speak the bitter word. No one hated "sweetness" more than Michelangelo, the sceptic, the pessimistic despiser of the world.

It is only natural that this mode of expression, adjusted to extremest conciseness of utterance, no longer

tarries over the careful execution of naturalistic detail. The figure of night—completed earlier than the others —is the only one to be finished in all its details; the

38. MICHELANGELO
Prigioniero, 1518–1522, Florence, Accademia di belle arti.

39. MICHELANGELO
Prigioniero, 1518–1522, Florence, Accademia di belle arti.

marble is even highly polished. It seems to us as if this figure were for that reason out of harmony with the rest. At any rate, it would be an intolerable thought to imagine all the figures in the chapel as elaborately done. The hurricane of emotion which roars through the Medici chapel clamored imperiously for the form

of mere suggestion, for the sketch. What place is there in this tumultuous uproar for the delay which a single elaborate face would have infallibly entailed? Symbols will not endure being degraded into allegories. Michelangelo hammers a movement out of the stone; when it speaks clearly and unmistakably, then he has said all that was to be said, and he lays the chisel down. He wishes to have us know: further work is pointless. The still visible chisel-marks give the stone, moreover, a rhythmical animation, much as the unsoftened, sketchily broad brush-stroke of Rembrandt does in his late paintings.

Hence I am firmly of the conviction that those late figures for the tomb of Julius—the *Prigionieri* (38, 39)—are not left only half-hewn out of the stone because Michelangelo found no time to complete them, but solely because he wanted them so. What though he may have thought of a smoother execution to begin with: when he *saw* them before him in that state, he probably said to himself, as does any unprejudiced beholder to-day: Shall I not rob these figures of their profoundest expressiveness, if I release them wholly from the stone, from the stone which now encompasses them on all sides like a tenacious, horribly fettering mass, from the stone against which they rebel, with which they struggle, from which they strive to escape, and from which they will never be able to emerge?

Man in a hopeless struggle with destiny: his own creed throughout his whole life. How could he have ever had the heart to obliterate from these *Prigionieri* the antagonism of the stone, when once he saw the effect? Did he not say himself that no artist could invent anything better than that which is already inherent in the

stone? The conflict of form and chaos, the dissonance that eternally clamors for release—do not the *Prigionieri* afford the key to the most hidden secret chamber in the soul of the great sculptor?

CHAPTER III

DÜRER AND THE GOTHIC AGE

I

In the doctrine that there is no other beauty than that of the human body, Michelangelo had really only found a formulation for that Italian conception which had been from time immemorial a recognized ideal of the Mediterranean peoples. *Homo mensura omnium*—man is the measure of all things—that had been the art-axiom as far back as Greek and Roman times.

Natural as this was for the Mediterranean peoples, just as alien, incomprehensible, and offensive was it to the peoples that lived north of the Alps, to whom the Italians had given the name of the Goths. By "Gothic" they understood everything non-Italian, barbarian. The axiom *homo mensura omnium*, precisely because it is so Mediterranean, is un-Gothic down to its deepest roots.

The new art of reality which grew up in that trans-alpine civilization at the same time with the Italian, after 1400, was in every respect the offspring of Gothic art. This elementary fact we shall do well to keep ever-present before us; only thus can we understand why and in what essential points the art of northwest and north-east Europe, even in periods of a lively interchange of opinion between north and south, is fundamentally distinguished from everything Italian.

Under the collective concept Gothic we understand to-day, not at all like the Italians of old, the highest embodiment of the mediæval Nordic character, a wholly

unified and original, underived civilization. We understand by it everything that was produced in the thirteenth century, especially by France, as the purest of cultural utterances; the Gothic cathedrals, scholastic philosophy, contrapuntal music, the highly developed courtly-social life which, after the model of the French royal court, swiftly spread over all Europe to the north of the Alps; and, last but not least, the Gothic Man.

Now, how can we succeed in analyzing concisely the essence of the Gothic spirit? Gothic architecture, viewed not with regard to its external characteristics but to its inner make-up, its nature, is probably best adapted to give us a tolerably adequate conception of the Gothic spirit.

The Italians never possessed a Gothic style. They did indeed adopt from France single features such as ornamental forms (pointed arches) or technical achievements (system of vaulting) and graft them as a sort of Gothic mannerism—they themselves called it a *maniera Gotica*—onto their own quite differently constituted spatial instinct, a process of which the "Gothic" cathedral at Florence is the best example. The so-called Gothic buildings of Italy are about as far from the genuine Gothic as the *Chinoiseries* cultivated in eighteenth-century Paris were from genuine Chinese art. Michelangelo, who was fond of calling the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, likewise built in the Gothic manner, his "betrothed," would probably not have been able to stay one hour in a genuine Gothic church, because everything about it would have been repellent to his artistic instinct and understanding, but above all because the genuine Gothic makes it a principle to take no notice either of the measure of man, or

indeed of man in any respect. If it actually does so on occasion, it is in order to place itself in a position of unfeigned opposition to man.

The very boundlessness of height and depth, the proportions of the Gothic cathedral, transcending as

40. INTERIOR OF ST. LORENZO'S CHURCH, FLORENCE

they do all human measure, which afford the faithful mystical forebodings of infinity and at the same time hammer into his consciousness the nullity of his own tiny person—all this is a horror to the simple understanding of the Italian, which likes to operate with clear and easily imaginable magnitudes. He is wont to comprehend the world in its plastic, present commensurableness; in the Northerner, the love of the intangible, the indefinable, the barely divinable is inborn.

What the early Florentine Renaissance thought about church-building has been shown by no one more clearly than by Brunellesco in his San Lorenzo (40). The simple mathematical proportion of 1:2 is fixed by him from the beginning for the height and breadth of the main space, for the relation of the central nave to the transverse naves, for the distances between the pillars, for the structural division of the walls, in short for all the structural proportions, and he sees to it that this simple proportion shall everywhere be clearly and visibly conveyed to the eye and the understanding. What Brunellesco, like all Italians, calls "space," is tangible, a cubic thing, so to speak; something that is visibly determinable by the definite limits which enclose it—floor, walls, ceiling. But Gothic space is something simply intangible, which escapes our instinct and still more the understanding that attempts to lay hold on it. Gothic space is nothing static at all, but something dynamic: an upward and forward urge that never comes to an end; a form of becoming, not a form of being.

Detachable, fixed boundaries, like the Italian walls, do not exist in Gothic cathedrals, or, where they do appear, they have been rendered ineffective. All stone is stripped of its material character, as it were: it presents itself as a sublimated force, which shoots upward in clustered rays of energy toward a further development, a further ramification. When the Italian breaks up his wall-space here and there with windows, he emphasizes thereby the massive character of the wall more than he lightens it. In the Gothic cathedral (41) there are no walls, any more than there are windows to break them up. There are only vertical supports and

upright clefts between them, that is, non-walls. High glass windows do indeed close the rifts, but only like something floating and vague, and the colored light

41. INTERIOR OF THE COLOGNE CATHEDRAL

that seeps through them and fills the church with dusk makes the space still more intangible and unreal than it was before.

This wholly irrational space—so wholly opposed to

the measurable, rational Italian space—is the true growth of a land whose climate and soil constituents have trained man to be the foreboder of the mysterious and the avowed enemy of hard actuality. The Gothic spirit was possible only among peoples who sought in their endless forests rather the mysterious murmur than the concrete tree, and who apprehended in the elusive soughing of the wind in the branches the breath, the revelation of an unseen deity. Never did the Northerners think, like the Mediterranean peoples, of transforming every tree, every spring, every gale on the sea, every thunder-storm, into the manlike figures of hyads, hamadryads, Poseidon, or Zeus.

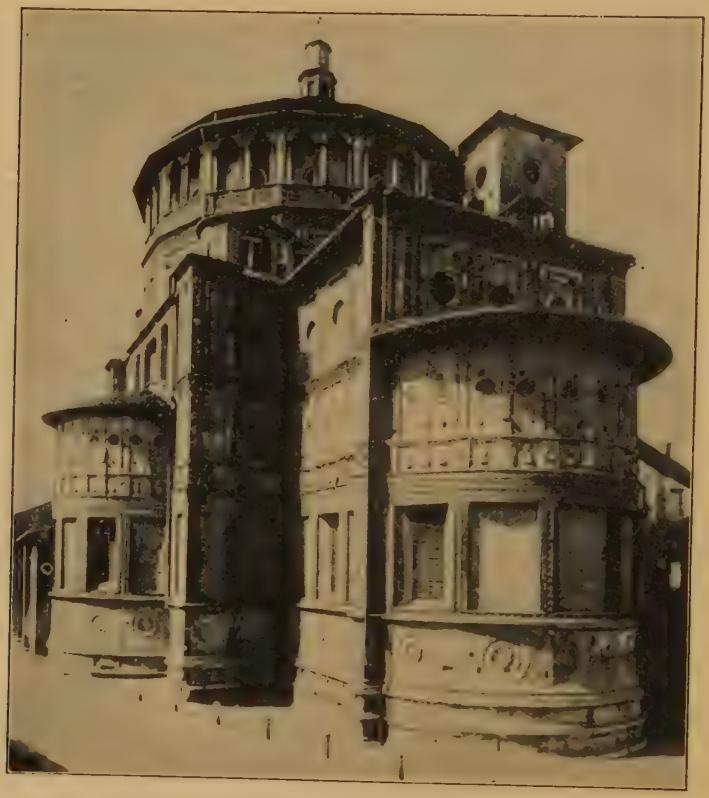
The clear tangibility of an Italian structure, like the above-cited San Lorenzo of Brunellesco, is based in the truest sense on the anthropomorphosis (humanization) of the whole architectonic apparatus. As a beautifully formed, powerful man displays his physical symmetry when he supports a given burden without effort—who does not know the eternally refreshing picture of those Italian women who balance heavy water-jugs on their heads with playful ease?—so the pillars in Brunellesco's church bear the burden of the entablature and the heavy, coffered ceiling. The beautiful spectacle of a harmonious balance of force and burden constitutes an essential part of the æsthetic effect. The pillar is composed of members, just like a person, having a foot, torso, and head. The "joints," which link the parts, are so formed that the intelligent spectator instinctively feels their functions. But the Gothic pillar will not be judged, any more than the entire edifice, by the standard of the members of a human body. It is a power-symbol to which no burden corresponds, a dynamic equation.

Joints are wholly lacking in it; it soars upward in an unbroken sweep. As indeed the space in a Gothic church is something which absolutely cannot be taken apart. Capitals or foliage wreaths attached to the pillar at one place or another do not symbolize, as for instance does the Greek or Renaissance capital with its muscular entasis, its volutes tightened up to resist the weight, or its broad flat plinth which softens the impact of the load, the counteraction of force and burden. Indeed, the expression of a burden that is to be overcome by the pillar is altogether lacking, as we have said, for the Gothic vault symbolizes in the rippling network of its transverse ribs only a spraying out of the endlessly upward-shooting energies.

The indivisibility and the non-detachableness of the single parts from the ramifications of the whole are as unambiguously expressed in the Gothic edifice as its opposite in the Italian. Not as if there had been in Italy no unity and no form of "artistic entirety"; the distinction lies only in what each people understands by unity. For the Italian instinct for beauty every whole is only beautiful if it affects us as a harmony of independent parts, and all the great Italians have seen to it that every portion of the edifice retains its inherent individuality, independent, in and of itself, of the rest, even though it maintains a harmonious interaction with the other parts. Every purely Italian edifice, it seems to us, we could reduce æsthetically to its components without effort, dissect it, as it were, like a human body. Provided we bear the visible "joints" in mind, each member will lie before us, after the operation, as a complete and beautiful entirety: the base of the pillar, the shaft, the capital, the ceiling with its cof-

fers, each wall, chapel, dome, the bell-tower. That had been the case as early as the Roman period in Italy, and remains so throughout Renaissance and Baroque. The exterior of the Romanesque cathedral at Parma is similar in this respect to the choir of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan (42), which Bramante built in the fifteenth century, despite the fact that the ornamental motifs are utterly different: in both cases the attached choir-chapels, in the form of beautiful hexahedrons or half-cylinders, are connected only by hinges, so to speak, so pliant and loose that one feels as if the whole aggregation could be taken apart with ease. A similar attempt at dissection—undertaken, say, in the case of the late-Romanesque Church of the Apostles at Cologne (43)—would lead only to disastrous mutilation; the apses of that choir are to be sure laid out in a scheme quite similar to those in Parma and Milan, but the hinges are lacking, and it looks as if each apse had so grown together with the others that every incision would strike deep into the living flesh. In the Gothic cathedral this indivisibility is still more outspoken. Pillar-clusters, not individual columns; these clusters again knitted together with the ceiling, which itself is nothing but a ramification of those clusters of energy-rays. Nor is any division possible in a horizontal direction: the horizontal ledges run along behind or before the responds and pillar-clusters, do not strike them at an accentuated point, but in the middle of the shaft; it is as if the upward-speeding stream had already passed by the time the forward-speeding one reaches the spot where they might have united and rested for a moment. Finally, who would be so mad as to try to detach a Gothic spire, such as that of the Ulm or Freiburg cathedral,

from the horizontal structure, to which it is related as the crown of a tree to its root? The Italians prefer to set the bell-tower as a separate entity beside the church, akin to it in no respect, united in one harmony with it



42. SANTA MARIA DELLE GRAZIE, MILAN

only by the resemblance of its proportions. The campanile at Florence is an example.

What we have attempted to analyze here with respect to single buildings proves also to be valid with respect to the manner in which Gothic churches, city

halls, or other monumental structures are incorporated in the total picture of the city; the planning of whole series of streets underlies consistently the same æsthetic laws.

Italian edifices assert their individuality primarily

43. THE APOSTLE'S CHURCH, COLOGNE

by the fact that they stand alone and reject all dependence on their neighbors. Even the "Gothic" Palazzo Vecchio, the city hall of Florence (44), for all its hexahedral form bounded by clear vertical and horizontal lines, is so definitively finished that it can never fuse

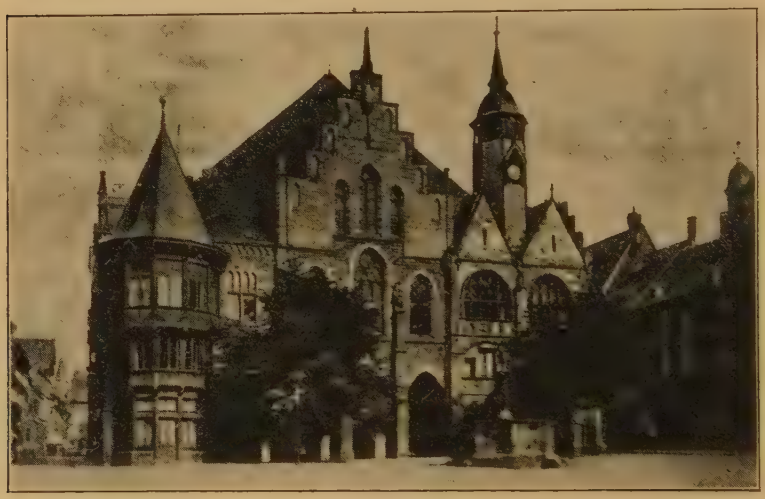
with the surrounding buildings. That it nevertheless subordinates itself to the unity of the entire square and to a certain extent, as *primus inter pares*, dominates it, is due to the harmonious relation between its height

44. FLORENCE, PALAZZO VECCHIO

and the width of the square. Also the other buildings bear upon each other only by virtue of the harmony of their mutual proportions. The square as a whole is the symbol of a society of independent citizens, who subordinate themselves to an elective chief, provided that he leaves their independence inviolate.

45. THE CATHEDRAL OF LIMBURG ON THE LAHN

Nordic monumental edifices blend with their surroundings. The cathedral at Limburg on the Lahn (45) grows up out of the natural rock high above the river as if itself were a part of the rock, and its seven towers that shoot upward in accordance with the



46. HILDESHEIM, GERMANY: THE CITY HALL

principle of unforced grouping have the effect of a conscious "stylizing" of the jagged rocks which they continue upward, as it were. The powerful artistic effect is due to the unlimited interaction of Nature and edifice. And where in any northern city an open square had grown about a Gothic city hall or a church, the apparently disorderly gables and little spires on the surrounding houses provide for the creation of the impression that the whole had grown into an indissoluble entity. Somewhere, for instance, a tower works its way out of a city hall (46)—which is unsymmetrically joined together in the first place—not in the centre, but

47. ROTHENBURG ON THE TAUBER; VIEW OVER THE CITY WALLS

where one would least expect it, perhaps at one corner; in the coherence of the city hall itself there is no counterweight to be found, but in its stead the tower or gable on some proximate building undertakes to restore the defective equilibrium. On this house, in turn, some other apparent irregularity is to be noted; but if we only look somewhat farther along the rows of buildings, the balancing feature will surely be found. This is one characteristic of northern city-planning: the movement goes ever onward, never comes to a standstill; groups form and relate themselves to each other; not the smallest part is independent. (47.) Hence too we can take nothing out of its context without destroying the total rhythm. The animation of the uninterruptedly onward-surging gables, now small, now large, now pointed, now round, the jutting oriels at different heights, the sharp-angled street-lines—all this combines to create an indefinable rhythm. To be sure, one thing is definable: it is a rhythm without a clearly fixed metre. The whole city, like each of its buildings, is the result of organic growth, not a metrical structure artificially produced by rational rules. The simile of the endless forest is more appropriate to Gothic art than that of the human body; everywhere we see the stamp of constant change; we see becoming, not being.[1]

Hence also the fugue, polyphony, is the inborn expressive medium of the nordic, Gothic man, not the homophonous melody that is sustained by mere chords, or the sonata that is built up according to a predetermined structural plan. The melodic form in the Gothic

[1] A thorough, detailed study of the antithesis between Germanic and Latin form is presented in the author's book, *Deutsches Sehen*, second edition (Munich, Piper, 1923).

lands was always the more or less asymmetrically and unconstrainedly developing "unending" melody.[2]

Since the principle of welding all collaborative arts and art-forms into one final, indissoluble totality has never and nowhere experienced a more consistent perfection than in the Gothic, it is quite obvious that the arts which strove for an imitation of Nature had to bow to the same laws which architecture obeyed.

The Gothic altar in its purest form shows the absolute subordination of painting and plastic art to the laws of architecture.

In the old Christian church the altar had been a mere piece of furniture, *behind* which (not *before* it) the officiating priest stood. In order to accentuate optically, so to speak, the spiritual factor in especially large churches, a canopy resting on columns, the so-called *Ciborium*, was from quite early times erected over the

[2] Whoever thinks of the French music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will find this observation false, to be sure, that is if France, the motherland of Gothic, is to continue to pass for the representative of Gothic principles. On that point the following might be said: The France of to-day is no longer to be viewed as in the sphere of Gothic civilization; she belongs to the Mediterranean sphere. Since the late fifteenth century, France has steered more and more into the wake of Latin art and civilization, to the same degree that the Celto-Roman racial peculiarities underlying the make-up of her population have in course of time gained the ascendancy over the Gallo-Frankish—that is, half Germanic—racial characters. The North-French, Burgundian art of the fifteenth century was completely assimilated to the art of the Netherlands. The alienation from Gothic had already set in at Avignon, in the fourteenth century, in whose school Italian artists worked side by side with Frenchmen, Netherlanders, and Germans. This abandonment of Gothic became complete when Francis I called Primaticcio and Rosso from Florence in the sixteenth century to found the school of Fontainebleau. At that time Gothic civilization was already dead in France. It lives on in the lands of Germanic blood, in the so-called *Sondergotik* of Germany. (The designation was coined by Kurt Gerstenberg in his book *Deutsche Sondergotik*, Munich, Delphin Verlag, 1913.) The German Baroque and Rococo are direct descendants of the Gothic, whereas the French "Louis XVI" which corresponds to the German Rococo can be directly traced back to the early Italian Renaissance and to Fouquet, the man who imported it into France. Rembrandt, the Dutchman, is Gothic in the deepest sense; Poussin, his French contemporary, a Roman. And the painting of France in the nineteenth century derives from Poussin more than from any other.

altar-table. For pictorial decoration, so long as the priest stood behind the table, there was no room upon it, for that would have concealed him from the eyes of the congregation. So there was placed under the table —between floor and table-top—a screen, the so-called *Antependium*, mostly richly ornamented in hammered gold or silver with figurative designs. This is the forerunner of the subsequent altar-screen. A change in the ritual which brought the priest out before the altar, instead of behind it, had the result that the customary ornamentation of the altar was placed above the table, as a rear wall. Italian art insisted upon exalting the *Quadro*, the detached altar-painting, to the function of altar-screen; Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" or Titian's "Assumption" represent this type at its purest. But Gothic art evolved the form of altar-screen which was peculiar to itself, and which was designed, characteristically enough, to make the originally detached altar-table, the *mensa*, an integral part of the church interior as a whole, that is, to weld it indissolubly, so to speak, with the cathedral, or it might be with the choir or the chapel. A highly artistic construction, frequently reaching up to the vaulting above, and combining architectonic, sculptural, and pictorial elements, tapers up from the *mensa* in such a way that its outline repeats as by an echo the outline of the chapel, or of the so-called triumphal arch under which the altar stands. Massive and heavy below, it becomes lighter and lighter, the higher it rises, until finally the highest tip sprays out against the network of the vaulting in the brilliant fireworks of its tiny turrets. From this basic form the German Gothic, in particular, evolved the still more complicated struc-

48. CARVED ALTAR-PIECE BY VEIT STOSS (WINGS HALF SHUT), 1489, CRACOW, ST. MARY'S CHURCH

tures of the so-called revolving altar. (48, 49.) The heart of the whole construction, the shrine, may be enclosed in from two to five pairs of shutters or wings. Now when these are opened serially, there is revealed one "transformation" after another in a steady upward progression. The various arts interact in the interest of this progressive intensification of the effect. It begins, perhaps, on the outer shutters with a colorless painting of gray on gray. When the first pair of shutters is opened, the second view shows pictures of vivid, shining colorfulness; when these in turn are unfolded, carvings in relief are revealed; the shrine itself, however, a deep, dark-shrouded repository, is covered with partly detached carven figures of large proportions, whose dazzling gilding gleams out of the darkness, in the reflection of the candle-light, with indescribably mysterious splendor. The most overpowering spectacle of this type is still afforded by the Isenheim altar, created by Matthias Grünewald about 1510, whose several transformations follow upon one another in breathless upward sequence, like three acts of a passion play.[3]

We must make clear to ourselves that almost every bit of Gothic painting or carving that now stands or hangs in the museums is scattered fragments of original totalities, *disjecta membra*, which can no longer give any adequate idea of the original effect, as little as could a jewel that one has pried out of an artistically designed setting. Italian statues and pictures, which were born as self-sufficient individualities, can be isolated and enjoyed in museums: northern works cannot.

It follows directly from the above that a sculptured figure of a saint, a carven portrait-bust, or a painted

[3] See the author's book, *Matthias Grünewald*, fourth edition (Munich, Piper, 1923).

49. CARVED ALTAR-PIECE BY VEIT STOSS (WINGS OPENED), 1489, CRACOW, ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Madonna created by a northern artist may not be judged by the laws of beauty which are derived from the human organism, but solely in accordance with the laws of beauty indwelling in the idea of the Gothic art-complex.

The figure of a saint, chiselled by an Italian sculptor and erected upon an altar or a church-portal, was for Italian feeling an individual, a complete work of art, which did not receive its laws from the place where it stood, but embodied them in itself. For which reason there was also no barrier between Nature and art in Italy, when the reproduction of reality had become the slogan. A statue could be absolutely natural; so long as its proportions were good, and the figure was *per se* well-finished and well-balanced, it could stand in any space and at any place. But even if a Gothic artist had wanted to study Nature, he could not escape from the higher compulsion of the totality in which his work was to live. His figures could never be self-sufficient, independent creations; on the contrary, in order to subordinate themselves to the higher continuities, they had to divest themselves of their independence to the utmost possible extent. A figure on a pillar, for example, must be adapted to the high-ranging proportions of the pillar; if it were to move with organic accuracy, in accordance with the physiological laws of its limbs, if it were formed according to the normal proportions of the human body, then it would in the first place carry something manlike into the non-human Gothic edifice, but in the second place it would interrupt, instead of accompanying, the speeding current of the pillar-cluster, and would itself drop out of the framework of the whole.

The need of feeling their way into the human body had led the Italian artists, even at a relatively early stage, to give the jointed structure of the naked body behind the robe a certain visible prominence, so to speak. The garb of Italian robed figures constitutes the echo of the bodily motif. Soon the garment is even formed outside the body as something independent; it follows its own weight, so that when the saint, for instance, lifts himself up, the robe drags downward. The two parts of the figure—body and robe—are treated as antithesis and contrast to each other. This counteraction forms one of the most interesting problems in the Florentine sculpture-studios of the fifteenth century.

The true Gothic, on the other hand, will treat body and clothing as integral and indissoluble. (50.) Since the latter constitutes the sole visible exterior of the figure, the body soon sinks out of sight in the folds; the figures only consist of folds, arms, and heads. But the robe, which alone has optical effectiveness, again affords the desired opportunity to support the abstract dynamic utterance, so to speak, striven for by the surrounding architecture. In this way we must understand, for instance, the vertical folds of figures on Gothic pillars. The pillars themselves, against which they lean and with which they seek to coalesce, are completely split up into thin vertical streams, with which is of course connected, in the main, the dynamic expression of an uninterrupted upward movement. The Gothic sculptors borrow from the pillar the rhythmic-dynamic motif, and repeat it, though mostly with slight variation, in the vertical furrows of the robes. And so all bodily weight seems to have been eliminated from the figures.

In this treatment of clothing as a purely artistic device which does not obey the law of gravity—that is, as sheer ornament—another trait finds expression which

50. MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION

(Viewed from two sides.) By an anonymous master of the Tyrol, *ca.* 1400, Wiesbaden, Germany, private collection.

is deeply and inwardly rooted in the essence of the Gothic principle.

I mean the artistic instinct for the mysterious language of the ornamental line *per se*. Whoever has seen many robed Gothic figures will have felt something of

the mystic expressive force of these quite unnaturally swelling, bulging, sharply rising, heavily drooping, softly plashing, volubly chattering draperies. What finds expression there is a more or less abstract form-fantasia which appears to be deeply implanted in the nordic man from time immemorial. On the mortuary gifts in the tombs dating from the Great Migration (fourth to sixth century), in the book-illustrations of the Anglo-Saxons and Irish, in the Carolingian and Ottonian miniatures, and so on into the French Gothic we find uniformly an artistic delight in the drawing of interwoven, ornamental flourishes. Is it not the same form-spirit that lives on in the stone fretwork of Gothic church-windows, in the star-and-vine patterns of Gothic vaulting, or indeed even in the lead mullions by which the single glass-tablets of a cathedral window are held together, and which go on recklessly luxuriating, as a peculiar unbroken lacework, over faces, garment-folds, and bodies, producing the impression of a ceaselessly rippling motion? (51.) This seemingly abstract movement of ornamental lines subsists beside, in, and beyond the thing represented, as an element of the polyphonically interweaving movement of expression. It signifies for the true Gothic about the same as bodily movement and the language of gesture mean to the Italian.

It permits of no doubt that in primitive times such flourishes had the significance of a secret magic. But even to us unillusioned people of the twentieth century the fantastic mysticism of such involved line-patterns speaks with undiminished force, when we see, for example, a group of leafless trees against the horizon, with their thousands and thousands of intertwining branches.

This linear ornamentation is first of all a device

whereby motion as such can be illustrated. Motion in a plane, motion in space. Just as in music an accompaniment of rippling sixteenth notes or triplets enables us to present even a sustained melody as an animated

51. THE TREE OF JESSE
Fragment of a carved altar-piece, 1520, Kalkar, Germany.

rhythm, so the sudden interruption of a surface by a ripple of folds can impart the impression of vivacity to a painted or carven figure. A quivering, discontinuous ornament can become the expression of violence and agitation, a rounded, sonorous ornament can convey the expression of tranquillity.

Italian art, like the art of all Mediterranean peoples, is ignorant of this type of expressive ornamentation, which is transmitted from the Gothic to modern art. It knows only the decorative, embellishing neutral

ornamentation. Nor does it know the welding powers of the ornament, its unending melody. And as the Italian conceives of the human body as composed of its measurable parts, so too with the ornament. Be it drapery, vine, or what-not, for the Italian the ornament is only endurable when it is finite, structurally composed, divisible, independent, metrical.

II

Wholly saturated and permeated with this Gothic tradition were the first naturalists of the North as they approached both reality and art. An ancient art, which might have been able to shorten for them the road to Nature, which might perhaps have even turned their inborn creative art-thinking into wholly other channels, did not exist for them.

Shall we say that their eyes were dimmed to the world by the Gothic spirit? When they looked upon Nature and esteemed man as nothing, but the infinite weaving of the woods and the light as everything, did they not conform therein to those yearnings that the nordic man wished his artists to satisfy first of all? If they sought in the billowing of draperies secrets that seemed to them more important than any nude, however cleanly drawn—which of course nobody in the North had ever seen *in natura*—did the pictorial description mean nothing to the people? When Altdorfer (1480–1538) sought to fix, let us say, the intangible, the boundlessly surging as one of the manifestations of space in his pictures of the forest, did he not obey the will that had once led the Gothic architects? Did he not obey it more single-mindedly than if he had at-

tempted to follow the Italian recipe of building up a measurable, clearly delimited space out of plastic components?

The tragedy of nordic painting, however, consisted in the fact that Gothic had to yield to Renaissance. When Renaissance civilization rolled northward in mighty billows, and even Germany was so flooded by it in the course of the sixteenth century that in Nuremberg men soon spoke as good Ciceronian Latin as in Florence or Rome, art could not continue to talk Gothic all by itself. That is the perception which drove first Dürer and then Holbein to Italy.

In any case, there was no chance of resistance. The car had begun to move, and men's sole duty was to see that its wild career did not hurl it sooner or later into the abyss. The international intercourse of artists had led even during the fifteenth century to a continuous exchange of ideas. The rational methods of the Italians, their clear pictorial instinct, their scientific treatment of the problems of perspective and anatomy, had found an echo first of all in the Netherlands. Roger van der Weyden had brought home with him from Italy in 1450 a treasure-store of teachings which made the school of the Netherlands superior to the other painter-nations of western and eastern Europe for decades afterward. In exchange for these acquisitions, Roger van der Weyden had bequeathed to the Italians the technical accomplishments of the Netherland school of painting. Antonello da Messina, who had studied in Ghent, and Josse van Ghent, who collaborated with Melozzo da Forli at the court of Urbino, provided for the further spread of Flemish technic in Italy.

German painters, in the meantime, had received

both the Dutch-Flemish technic and the Italian rules from the Netherlands. Martin Schongauer (1450–91), the greatest of the Gothic painters of Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century, helped to disseminate these teachings. He was a copper-engraver, and the possibilities of easy multiplication afforded by the engraving insured his influence a wider radius than any painter before him had possessed. Also the Italians began to disseminate their inventions by means of copper-engravings.

With such an active exchange of opinion, a confusion of mind and thought was the inevitable result. But in particular, the direct collision of Gothic and Renaissance in Germany must have led to a catastrophe, if a leader had not been found at the right time, one sufficiently far-sighted and with enough strength of personality to steer the bark of art out of confusion and unrest into a safe course. Such a leader was born to German painting in the hour of its direst need: Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg (1471–1528).

In the entire history of art, there has probably never been such another teacher of the people as Dürer; a genius who had the feeling of responsibility, the pedagogical instinct, the universality and purposefulness of the born leader, such as no other united in one person.

He had grown to manhood in Nuremberg, a city in which Gothic civilization ruled unconditionally and without a rival. His two teachers, the old stodgy Michael Wolgemut and the young, brilliantly original Wilhelm Pleydenwurf, were Gothic to their very fingertips. In Wolgemut's workshop a kind of pictorial art was cultivated which rendered homage more than any other to the linear lacework of the Gothic: the wood-

cut. Here Dürer was inoculated with the spirit of the black-and-white, which made him for life more of a graphic artist than a painter.

As a young man this pure Gothic artist came into contact with the Italian school; not merely with the copper-engravings that now and then fluttered across the Alps and which of course could convey only a feeble reflection, but with the entirety of Italian artistic expression. He saw Italian cities like Padua and Venice, Italian edifices of the early Renaissance, sculptures, and paintings; he probably associated with Italian painters, as indeed he did on his later visit to Venice. He saw the bold frescoes of Mantegna and the soft harmonious color-miracles of Giovanni Bellini. Even at that time, upon this first contact, the illumination must have come to him that if Germany ever wished to hold her own beside this evolving world-art, she must for the moment lay aside all other aspirations and begin to learn again from the very beginning. But he instinctively recognized something else at the same time, and this perception is perhaps the strongest proof of the greatness of Dürer's leadership.

He recognized that Germany must be preserved from a mere slavish imitation of Italian art. To be sure it was necessary to learn to see Nature more naïvely and clearly than heretofore, to learn to understand the human body, above all the nude, anatomically and optically. But at the same time, he felt, the inborn idiosyncrasies of German art-speech must not be given up, nor given away in exchange; it was essential that the spirit of the expressive ornamental line should be preserved. For only if you speak the language of your people will your people understand you.

52. ALBRECHT DÜRER

The Four Riders of the Apocalypse, woodcut, 1497.

The first great woodcut series of Dürer, the "Apocalypse" and the so-called "Large Passion" (both 1497), are both, as regards the modelling of the body (to emphasize but this one point), incomparably clearer than anything that German draftsmanship of the fifteenth century has to show. Reminiscences of Mantegna are frequent in them, above all in the expressive heads. But the Gothic speech, the vernacular idiom, the sweeping line-patterns that span a sheet from top to bottom, these still speak as before their mysterious, powerfully affecting language.

Let no one attribute the gnarled and knotted outline in the "Four Riders of the Apocalypse" (52) to ineptitude or weakness; call it rather the will-to-style, call it strength. We know from nearly contemporaneous nature-studies of Dürer that when he wished he could draw as accurately and objectively as any of the Italians; in this light, look at that "Patch of Lawn," as accurate as a photograph, or the "Stag-Beetle" (both in the Albertina collection of drawings at Vienna). But what would those riders be without the transporting, truly apocalyptic power of the stylizing line? That is precisely what lifts them out of the prosaic everyday world, namely that clouds are aggregated out of swirling lines, and horse-bodies out of galloping line-rhythms, and that the procession of the three in the middle drives the space asunder like one single mighty transverse wedge. Let one try to imagine how the thing would look if the horses were photographically correct or the landscape complete, or the throngs of the fallen were fully enumerated on the ground; would anything then be left of this symbolical content of the Revelation of St. John? I hardly think so.

53. MARTIN SCHONGAUER
Flight into Egypt, engraving, *ca.* 1470.

With the expressive media of Gothic art-speech Dürer opened the eyes of his people and his time to Nature. In the woodcut entitled "The Flight to Egypt" (about 1504), which belongs to the series of the "Life of Mary," he depicted for the first time the interior of a forest. Schongauer, who had described the same subject in an engraving about thirty years before (53), had not got beyond a helpless enumeration of trees, flowers, and plants, so that one could apply to him in a special sense the old German proverb: he did not see the forest for the trees. Dürer saw and showed in his picture the forest as a whole (54); more than that, he saw the dusk of the forest. And so he also found for the first time the pictorial expression for that other secret of the German forest: when one is encompassed by forest shadows, sauntering along the edge of the woods, and then looks out at the hot fields and heights in the glare of the sun, the cosey feeling steals over him at times of how lucky he is to be here in the cool shade. In the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth (from the "Life of Mary") Dürer gave expression to this simple lyrical feeling for the first time.

Taking this attitude toward Nature in her more or less intangible atmospheric revelations, light came into his field of vision as a mood-giving lyrical element. On this subject, indeed, he composed an unspeakably delicate picture-poem, the engraving "St. Jerome in his Cell." (55.)

Do we not feel, as we contemplate this picture, the secret echo and the continuation of the Gothic spirit? The scholar's room is the theme; space. Not space as a tangible thing, so to speak, as the Italians were wont to represent it; for the walls, the windows, the beamed

54. ALBRECHT DÜRER
Flight into Egypt, woodcut, *ca.* 1504.

ceiling, the benches, and all the objects that lie and hang about in it, so neatly put in order, are of course only given in order to afford that intangible, bodiless entity, the light, the most secretive thing there is, surfaces to play upon. The spirit of the space, the unseizable essence that is active within it, that animates it, the floating atmosphere is the element of which Dürer shaped his picture. "St. Jerome in his Cell" is a lyric poem on the ebb and flow of light. In the oblique shafts of the afternoon sun it seeps in through the bottle-glass windows, which at once break it up in several directions; it plays with the twofold shadows on the embrasures, and flits across the graining of the wooden ceiling; it gathers into spots, on the table, on the floor. The counter-actors, the shadows, are driven apart wherever they gather, deep shadows are swallowed up by reflex-lights. It is the first time that a truly classic picture was built up on the theme which was later on to become the most characteristic element of the art of a Rembrandt.

That this art of Dürer lies on an entirely different plane, so to speak, from the exactly contemporaneous art of Italy, which had been carried by Michelangelo back to the representation and interpretation of man, will be made particularly clear by the foil to the "St. Jerome," the "Melancolia." (56.) In this plate Dürer depicts the most complete Faustian resignation

" . . . and see there's nothing we can know"

in the figure of a winged woman who is squatting on a low seat, almost on the ground, quite in the fashion of the Prophet Jeremiah on the Sistine ceiling (35), her weary head propped on her left arm, while the right,

55. ALBRECHT DÜRER
Jerome in His Cell, engraving, 1514.

holding a compass, rests inactive in her lap. But it is precisely the correspondence in the figure-motif which makes the deviation in all other points appear particularly noticeable. With Michelangelo, the total pictorial expression is exhausted in the representation of the weary Jeremiah. With Dürer, the allegorical female figure constitutes only one part, and not even the most essential one, of the total scene. The attributes of science and magic that are lying and standing about in disorder all over the ground, also a millstone, a dog, an hour-glass, a ladder, and, not least important, the distant seascape with haunting northern lights and the bow of promise above it—in short, the entire environment is an integral part of the whole. To be noted, moreover, how all these things jostle each other in space harshly and uncompromisingly; for the spiritual mood is really mirrored far more in this utterly "disorderly" picture than in the winged woman herself. Evidently Dürer made it a point, in order to give the most emphatic expression to the disruption which he would portray, to violate intentionally, as it were, all the rules of composition, to regard them as temporarily nullified. The woman is thrust far into the corner; in defiance of all balance, the heaviest things are likewise piled up in that corner. Asymmetry triumphs. Dissonances shriek. Horizontals and verticals are avoided or robbed of value: how harshly the oblique ladder stands there in the middle! The management of the light is likewise unusual. It is a most weird light, its greatest brightness is concentrated far down in that right corner which is already so heavily weighted; the darknesses lie higher, they extend upward to the very edge of the plate. Again we think of Michelangelo; the illumination of the Per-

56. ALBRECHT DÜRER
Melancolia, engraving, 1514.

sian Sibyl, presaging a thunder-storm, is achieved by similar means. (30.) But the distinction is that with Dürer the light is not a mere supplement—certainly not a wholly indispensable one—to the mood which is already quite unmistakably expressed in the bearing of the woman; it is the most supremely essential part of the entire picture. And the light is of course much more richly graduated than with Michelangelo; it is a sweeping and surging of the atmosphere in a thousand nuances. For illustration, let me call attention only to the multitude of folds in the robe of the winged figure, in whose ridges and hollows there is a flashing as of distant lightning.

III

Now, however, are we not employing very coarse means when we essay to measure Dürer by comparing his woodcuts and engravings with the monumental paintings of Michelangelo, when we seek, solely with the aid of such radically different problems, to ferret out the difference in conception and expression? The Roman frescoes are after all works of mighty dimensions, and the color plays in them an incomparably more important rôle than even in the paintings of Dürer and his contemporaries. But aside from that, the works of Dürer we have cited operate only with black and white, and are but little leaves that were printed in numerous copies; they were not calculated, like Michelangelo's frescoes, for a definite architectonic situation, indeed, not even intended as a wall-decoration, but for the portfolio of the collector, out of which they would only be drawn now and then. If then a comparison must be drawn between Dürer and Michelangelo, or some other Italian, for the

purpose of a sharper characterization of the former, would it not be more reasonable to begin with Dürer's *paintings*, among which there are indeed some truly monumental works—"The Feast of the Rosary," which he painted for a church in Venice, and which aroused in its day the highest admiration of the Venetian artists; or the "All Saints" painting, in which Dürer competed with Raphael's "Disputa"; or the "Four Apostles?"

In point of fact, such a procedure would tally with the custom of most of the art-critics who have written on the German art of the sixteenth century, and on Dürer. But it seems to me that one does German art a poor service by emphasizing that art-type in which it was weak, while that type in which all its power of originality reveals itself is but mentioned incidentally, or not at all.

Not painting, hampered as it was by a thousand deferences to sculpture, architecture, and "total art concept," no: graphic art is the pictorial sphere proper in which the German creative imagination of the sixteenth century manifested itself quite freely and greatly. Dürer's "Apocalypse," his "Life of Mary," his large and small woodcuts of the "Passion," his etchings of the "Passion," Cranach's woodcut series, Holbein's illustrations to the "Old Testament," and his "Dance of Death," Altdorfer's engravings—to pick only a few examples from the extraordinarily rich treasure of German graphic art in the sixteenth century—those are the autochthonous works, derived from no foreign school of art, of which Germany may justly be proud, and which she need not be ashamed to place side by side with the monumental paintings of the Italians.

We have already pointed out in detail that Gothic

painting might set itself monumental tasks only in a collaboration with sculpture and architecture that was tantamount to self-abnegation. No wonder that, with such a constant necessity for self-subordination, men with a specific aptitude for painting simply could not thrive. The history of Cranach, who began as a dazzlingly brilliant colorist and soon ran aground in the shoals of colorless formalism, is a terrifying lesson as to where the compulsion of tradition must lead, so soon as it came into conflict with those creative personalities that blossomed out in Germany as well as in Italy in the fifteenth century. Aside from young Cranach, German art of the sixteenth century can actually point to only two men who, as coloristically sensitive and coloristically creative painters, can vie with Bellini, Raphael, del Sarto, Correggio, and Titian: Matthias Grünewald, the creator of the Isenheim altar, and Hans Holbein the younger. Of strong personalities, whose inner craving was directed to untrammelled self-expression in painting, there was no lack in Germany, as we have said. But there were no suitable tasks for them. That the constant necessity of self-subordination became in the long run an intolerable torment to people like Dürer is sufficiently evident from Dürer's letters.[4] The discoverers of the new world of reality longed for an opportunity to express themselves for once freely and without restraint. But for their purposes the Gothic altar offered no scope, either from the standpoint of subject-matter or of form. Walls which could have been adorned with painting did not exist in Germany. And the northern climate was antagonistic to a fresco-painting such as was customary in the open apartments of sunny Italy.

[4] See W. M. Conway, *Literary Remains of Albrecht Dürer* (1889).

The desired release from all these distresses was now offered by the fifteenth-century invention of the copper-engraving and the woodcut. Graphic art actually became, just at the right moment, the safety-valve for violently repressed energies. Here there was no need of deferring to anything; neither on grounds of æsthetics nor of material. Since the printed picture, moreover, could be cheaply bought, it soon became a genuine folk-art. Subjects that were excluded from treatment in the altar-painting were permissible here. Nature could find expression in all her manifestations. In the popular copper-plate and in the woodcut, Biblical narratives could be depicted like events of the present, like excerpts from every-day life. Schöngauer had begun, back in the fifteenth century, to treat *genre* subjects in his engravings: street-urchins romping; the peasant driving his asses to market.

It will be asked how it happened that the will-to-expression which found a vent in the engraving and woodcut did not prefer to produce an independent branch of painting, free from the trammels of the altar-piece, a sort of profane domestic art. It is true that there is such a branch of painting in sixteenth-century Germany. The painted portrait even achieved a tremendous impetus at the hands of Dürer, Cranach, Baldung, Holbein, and others. Likewise the landscape, which found its principal field in the private devotional picture; Altdorfer painted in 1532 the first wholly independent landscape—that is without figures—known to art-history. (The painting in question is in the Old Pinakothek in Munich.)

Nevertheless, such pictures for the house are relatively few in number. Even if we take into consideration

how much has been lost in the meantime, we shall come to the conclusion that the number of such independent paintings which had nothing to do with altars is smaller than the number of independent paintings in Italy. But as for Germany herself, the numerical relation of these paintings to the enormous number of surviving engravings and woodcuts is comparatively small. Above all, however—and this is the decisive point—this entire branch of German domestic painting is unmistakably revealed by its whole style as only a descendant of graphic art, without which it is simply unthinkable.

I should not like to carry the comparison with Michelangelo, which I have already drawn more than once, too far, but this is the situation: as Michelangelo put upon the central Italian painting of the sixteenth century for all time the stamp and individuality of his *sculptural* thinking, so Dürer, Cranach, Baldung inoculated German painting with the specific modes of *graphic* conception. In other words: the graphic style is the specific German style of the sixteenth century, even as regards painting, just as the sculptural style is the specific Italian style of the same epoch.

The fundamental new task of pictorial art in Germany of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was no other than in contemporaneous Italy; crudely expressed: the pictorial mastery of reality. But whereas Italy was privileged to proceed, without any prejudices, to a conquest of reality in painting, certain restraints had been transmitted from the Gothic of the north which could not readily be reconciled with the aims of an objective reproduction of Nature. I recall the abstract formalism of ornament, the expressive linear movement, whose continuance we observed in Dürer's woodcuts of the

"Apocalypse." The nordic artist has never been content with the mere reproduction of an object. There must always be a concomitant vibration in his picture of something spiritual, something indefinable, divinable. The classical language of art which the nordic artist required could therefore not be as simply organized as the Italian speech of the same age; it had to be capable—if I may so express it—of giving simultaneously a real and an unreal, a corporeal and a spiritual picture of things: the tangible rider and the intangible movement of the rider.

These needs were wonderfully met in graphic art by the particular nature of its technic. Remoteness from reality is a peculiarity of all black-and-white art. In this respect it is quite fundamentally distinguished from painting. The expressive media to which woodcut and engraving are permanently limited are lines, and black and white in all their gradations.

Black and white; graphic art knows no further colors. But when the etcher or woodcutter shapes his objects in black and white, he seeks to represent with these tones, as everybody knows, by no means merely black or white or gray objects; he views natural objects wholly apart from their own colors, and uses his black and white in an abstract manner. He not only averts his gaze from everything in Nature that cannot be expressed in black and white, but he also reads black and white into Nature: even at points where it does not exist at all.

But the line is of abstract nature to an even higher degree. Our retina receives impressions from the world without only in surfaces and spots. The sole possibilities of expression inherent in the graphic tools—pencil, pen, graver—force the artist, however, to transform the manifestations of reality into linear designs, that is,

to create linear forms by abstraction from the spotty phenomena of reality. Now it is a further peculiarity of this abstract line that it readily yields itself to ornamentation by means of arabesques and linear flourishes, if for no other reason, to avoid creating an empty and tedious effect. But nothing could be more welcome to the Gothic artists, accustomed as they were to the expressive spiral ornament, than to find in the age of naturalism an expressive medium with which their imagination could occupy itself. Here they could apply those dynamic devices which had been actively alive even in olden days, in the linear network of the miniature. Hence the graphic line became an instrument on which they could perform without having to fear that their deviation from the objective content of Nature would be felt by the beholder as in any sense disturbing. For this is the significant phase of graphic art: because its means of expression condition a certain remoteness from reality at the very outset, our own realistic instinct is less likely to conflict with a representation that deviates from Nature than if we saw the same things in a painting. The "Apocalyptic Riders" of Dürer, *painted* just as they are, would be absolutely impossible; in the woodcut the dynamic exaggeration of the linear speech is perfectly natural.

Who would reproach Hans Baldung (1480-1545), with the fact that in his woodcut "The Four Witches" (57), he has to a certain extent done violence to the forms of Nature with his linear arabesques? The arabesque which determines the structure of the whole picture, shooting up out of the middle like a rocket and then spreading out in three directions—this linear abstraction is what held the artist's interest. From this,

57. HANS BALDUNG

Witches, woodcut, printed from two blocks.

and not from the bodies or the landscape, we feel blowing upon us the wild passion of a Witches' Sabbath on the Brocken.

IV

At this point the objection may be raised: but if graphic art forces the artist, by the nature of its technic, to ignore the objective, true facts of Nature and to transform her into abstract arabesques instead of reproducing her honestly and objectively—then how was nordic art able to participate in the solution of the principal problem of the entire Renaissance: in the revelation of reality? The question is pertinent. In order to answer it, we must look back into the fifteenth century for a moment.

Just like the Italians, the Northerners of that day also strove for the most exact and exhaustive reproduction of Nature. Jan van Eyck (1380-1441) was probably the most objective imitator of Nature that the history of art has known down to the present day. In that respect even Memling (1430-1495), at the end of the century, had made no further progress. To a still higher degree than in contemporaneous Italy, the most unbiassed imitation of the surface of things, their rounding, their color, their light, their atmosphere—in short, the painted reproduction of the image on the retina, so far as their technic allowed, was one of the goals of this primitive Flemish art. The early Germans of the same period lagged far behind the Flemish school in that regard. The traditions of Gothic kept them in bondage; for the Germans had not had the previous opportunity, like the artists of Flanders, of studying the naturalistic

miniatures of the fourteenth-century French, a preparatory school of naturalism. But the Germans also came to learn, after they had once had a thorough course of schooling under the Flemish, how one could make an external portrayal of the world in all its details. In the works of the elder Holbein (1460-1524), at the end of the fifteenth century, German painting stands exactly on a level with that of the Flemish. Nature is reproduced naïvely and with universal exhaustiveness in Holbein's pictures. Only one thing is lacking to both the primitive Germans and the primitive Flemings: psychological feeling. Northern art shortly before 1500, by devoting itself one-sidedly to the study of reality, very naturally lost the spiritual, or, to be more precise, the metaphysical quality that the Gothic had once possessed to so high a degree. A compensation for this loss would have been afforded in certain respects by a research into such spiritual elements as were contained within reality, in other words by a psychological penetration of reality. But the artists of this transition period lacked as yet the mental faculties for such research; they could not as yet look beneath the skin of reality, so to speak. This becomes quite clear when we contemplate the portraitists of that day, to whom man had not yet come to be a psychological problem.

The Italians of the sixteenth century also expected of their artists more than a mere illusory reproduction of the appearance of an object. A portrait, for example, was supposed to be more than a photograph of identification; it was to make visible the inwardness, the spiritual content of the persons. Leonardo and Raphael showed how, within the limits of sixteenth-century means of expression, one could compel the soul to speak.

Since painting by its nature can however describe nothing but the mute exterior, the facial features, there was but one possible road to this goal. One must choose the "speaking" features and, that their utterance might be clearly understood, silence all such features as were not to be heard. In other words: the painter must learn to abstract from the totality of the natural phenomenon. Only the complete absence of the unessential could guarantee the intensity of the essential. So the painters in the south began to restrict themselves to certain accents. The outlines of a portrait-head by Raphael are essentially simpler than the natural outline of the model. The eloquent parts of a face—eye, nose, mouth—are coordinated more strictly, more architectonically, as it were, than in Nature. The scheme of such a head is free of everything accidental, has something inalterable, inevitable about it. The style which cultivated such abstractions is therefore called the classical.

The North likewise evolved its classic style from the wholly exhaustive detailed depiction of external Nature. Excessively complete accuracy in detail was overcome by intensive accentuation, by restriction to essential features. But the abstraction, of which the graphic art of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century had been the school *par excellence*, proceeded much more resolutely than in Italy.

The intensification for which the North strove was however, strictly considered, more than a mere psychological penetration of the actual world; it involved at the same time a conscious reversion to the spirit and the expression-means of the Gothic, which the artists had been taught to apply even to reality by the "secret Gothicism" of the graphic arts. Through graphic tech-

nic they had learned to omit and to look closer, in other words: to abstract.

When Altdorfer depicts the forest he no longer gives

58. ALBRECHT ALTDORFER
The Forest Dweller, pen-and-ink drawing, Prague Museum.

a careful inventory of every leaf on the tree. He gives a cascade of light-lines, all shooting down in the same direction (58); the "streaming" of light in the woods, the dynamics of light, the cataract. That is a very subjective interpretation, certainly. One-sided, if you will.

But is it not precisely through this one-sidedness that the mystic life of the forest light speaks with an unprecedented suggestibility? Also the poet who ventured for the first time to assert of light that it "streamed" or that it "rippled"—that is, who ascribed to the light an action, a force—such a poet, too, was probably laughed at and mocked at first. What Altdorfer does is the same thing, only he does it in the drawn picture, not in the spoken one. He suggests a comparison. But the action speaks so intensively, so simply, because everything that might hamper that one impression is kept from the eye. The probability is that with all the subjectivity of the artist, his love, his spiritual relation to Nature, was deeper than that of an Italian, who gets no farther, in the last analysis, than the external body of fact, even though he subordinates on æsthetic grounds the less important forms to certain leading ones.

But one must remember this too: such a convincing intensification of a mood of Nature by way of abstract concentration upon a single rhythmical arabesque that expresses that mood would be *per se* utterly impossible if Altdorfer had not previously studied and mastered the forest in all its details. Only from the recollection of all that detail could he distil from it, so to speak, this last most simple expression.

It is important to know that German painters—in contrast to the majority of the Italians—painted their pictures almost wholly from memory. Preparatory studies were made before the object. From Dürer's studies we know how earnestly he sought to remain quite objective in the face of Nature, to put the check-rein, as it were, on his creative imagination. But so soon as the definitive work is to be taken in hand, then he lays his

59. LUCAS CRANACH

Repose in Egypt, 1504, Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

studies aside, then he creates from the heart, he abstracts. The more or less ideal, intensified expression could of course only be found in the imagination; the presence of the natural model in this phase would have irritated the creative powers of the imagination.

Grünewald (1483-1529) or Cranach (1472-1553) in his youth show that one can treat Nature abstractly even in color, if in a painting, for example, the landscape is expected to reveal its soul more deeply than it is likely to do to the ordinary, uncreative eye of the every-day person. Only through abstraction can we explain the "improbably" deep, flaming colorfulness of the landscape in Cranach's "Rest during the Flight to Egypt." (59.) The blue of the sky is deeper, the dark green of the bearded fir is more shiny, the white of the birch against the blue sky is more snowy, than ever in reality. But for that reason, too, a lyric intimacy speaks from this landscape such as no man had ever apprehended before, and which would never be thinkable in a picture which followed correctly the tonal values of Nature.

Something similar might be said of Hans Baldung's picture on the same subject. (60.) But here, at the same time, an opportunity is afforded to demonstrate how the abstract arabesque-speech of the outline—that is, a genuinely graphic element—collaborates as a medium of intensification. The branches of the fir-tree, thrusting themselves in front of a distant Alpine landscape in the upper right corner, are framed in a jagged, ragged outline: in an outline of such ornamental structure that we might think—seeing only that detail before us—we were dealing with the work of some Japanese. The gnarled, interwoven growth of the old red fir has been truly relived from within by Hans Baldung. If he wished to

reveal in his picture the secret life-rhythm of this tree, there was no other natural way open to him but that of intensifying from memory the impression made in Nature.

60. HANS BALDUNG
Repose in Egypt, 1512, Nürnberg, Germanic Museum.

The abstract linear speech of the woodcut put the right means in his hand.

Even though the nordic artists of those days had not learned the word "abstract," they knew very well the theory of artistic abstraction for the sake of an intensified

expression. Dürer once said: "What beauty is, I do not know; but beauty dwells in all of Nature, and he who can *draw it from her*, he has it." This "drawing from Nature" is nothing but what we call "abstracting." But what Dürer calls "beauty" in this passage is in reality the deeper meaning, the soul, that he and his contemporaries dimly felt behind all things; the interpretation. Speaking psychologically, of course no artist can "draw" anything from Nature which he has not previously read into Nature, after he has created it as an idea in his own imagination. The German artists, sons of the mystic Gothic as they all were, read back into Nature all the things they experienced from Nature. That was what they called beauty; something utterly and completely different, truly, than what the Italians understood by it. We know how the theory of "beautiful proportions" haunted the entire Italian Renaissance. Raphael admitted frankly that in making a portrait he would remodel his subjects according to a certain "idea" that was in his mind, beautify them. The Italians were firmly of the belief that beauty was something conceptually unambiguous, which could be learned from certain rules that were derived from the human body and its measurements. Once one had mastered this science of beauty, all one needed was to superimpose the canon of beautiful form on Nature like a finished matrix. Thus Leonardo once writes that before the artist studies a landscape he should learn the "correct measurements of its members."

The Northerners confessed that "they knew nothing." It was inconceivable to them how one could convert Nature into a formula. They wanted to "feel." Only in "feeling" and "being felt," in the eternally

new interpretation of existence from its past and present evolution . . . herein alone could they find the purpose of art.

Herein we also find the reason why German painting in the sixteenth century regarded itself as so little tied to fixed iconographic rules. How fundamentally different is the story of the Ascension as conceived by Dürer, by Grünewald, by Baldung, by Altdorfer. In Italy one consistent compositional scheme would be repeated over and over in such a case. That makes it like mathematics, like a formula. If we walk through the rooms of museums in which Italians hang side by side, we see at once how all the pictures in a room resemble each other in certain respects. But then when we enter the rooms of the northern schools, it seems all at once as if this latent likeness had been obliterated. The formal clarity has vanished; the pictures no longer resemble each other. Instead of the Italian self-limitation there speaks from the pictures on every hand an urge into the infinite, into the boundless, a wealth of purely ornamental forms that are forever in flux, something fundamentally different from everything Italian—in a word, Gothic.

When Altdorfer retold the legend of St. George and his battle with the dragon (61), did he adhere to any traditional "beautiful" formula? No. He interprets the story afresh, therefore no well-worn form will do him. The legend turns in his hands into a Nature-myth. What always appealed to the Italian in the presentation of the story—the plastic group of horseman and dragon—this becomes for Altdorfer only a pretext, as it were, for the depiction of the infinite space in which this battle takes place. One must seek the actors in this drama for a long time before he discovers them as tiny figures near the

lower margin. Not man is the hero in this play, but Nature. The picture is a symphony on the motif: forest.

61. ALBRECHT ALTDORFER
St. George Fighting the Dragon, 1510, Munich, Old Pinakothek.

But for Altdorfer the forest is not a tangible thing consisting of so and so many trees; for him it is what space

used to mean to the Gothic architects: a boundless surging movement of light, light-rhythm, abstraction from all reality.

Everything about the Gothic cathedral that we could analyze as characteristic of the nordic formal instinct determines the form of this picture too.

The space itself: more to be spiritually than physically apprehended; the heights, the rushing surge upward are made to speak. The whole is indivisible. Who could apply to this case the law of the "harmony of independent parts"—the æsthetic basis of any contemporaneous Italian picture? The resulting masses of foliage are indeed composite, but corresponding to no rational rule, to no symmetry. The spots of light that are interspersed with the green masses group themselves into paths of light that rove through the space like gleaming incense-burners. The crowns of the trees do not rest heavily on the trunks like the ceiling on the pillars of a Renaissance church; the tangle of branches can only be compared to the clustered energy-rays that, untrammelled by any burden, strive upward in the Gothic cathedral. All the forms melt into each other. It is a polyphonic harmony, an elfin dance.

This Gothic form serves no more, however, as it once did in the Middle Ages, for the interpretation of the Beyond; it serves for the interpretation of the Here-and-Now. The landscape in its summer dress, with its secretive stillness, the rustle of the forest . . . that is what painting is depicting now. The subject-matter is different from what it once was, when men were speaking of the Last Judgment. But the spirit is still the same. It is even to-day that divination which makes of the nordic poet the interpreter of the universe.

CHAPTER IV

REMBRANDT

I

And why Rembrandt?

If it is the purpose of this book to illustrate the evolution of art and man's view of the world down through the centuries by the study of its greatest and most typical masters, then why should Rembrandt stand for the seventeenth century? Why not Velazquez, the representative of Spanish Baroque, or Frans Hals, the Dutch impressionist? There are critics and artists who see in Frans Hals the greatest painter of all time. Others say the same of Velazquez. Why not Rubens, the dithyrambic Fleming, the singer of Baroque hedonism? Well, do the Spaniards, the Flemings, and the Dutch exhaust the representation of a world-civilization, which had in France and in Italy still another individual note, different from that of Spain and her provinces in the Netherlands? Then why not Poussin, or the masters of the Bologna academy, the Carracci, Domenichino, or Guido Reni? The flamboyant splendor and the mystic intoxication of the latter, after all, is connected in a special manner with our conception of the Baroque.

Let me hasten to say, however, that the word Baroque is to be understood here, as has become the customary practice in modern works on art-history, solely as a designation, not as a criticism, of the art of the seventeenth century, and embraces not only the architecture of that epoch, but the totality of its art. Some brief comments on this point seem to be desirable, since there is as

yet no complete international unanimity in the use of the word Baroque. The Italian word *barocco* seems to derive from philosophical terminology, where it designates a syllogism, something contradictory and paradoxical.[1] The French of the eighteenth century took over the word from the Italian vocabulary and used it to name and at the same time condemn an architectural mannerism that ran counter to the "classical rules" which commanded their exclusive veneration. Quatremère de Quincy analyzes the Baroque of the great Borromini and remarks, "The idea of the Baroque brings with it that of the ridiculous carried to excess." If the word Baroque, so much in use of late years, had still retained in our day an opprobrious connotation, it would scarcely have maintained itself as a designation for the style of the seventeenth century. As a title for that many-sided, truly creative, and perhaps most brilliant epoch of modern history it would then be still less appropriate than the name Renaissance for the preceding one, since it would not even, like the latter, employ a positive quality as characteristic, but would seek to make the entire style of the epoch ridiculous from the outset. That in our day, so far as I can see, the English are the only one of the European peoples who still feel an adverse criticism in the word is probably connected with the fact that in that land of conservatism and classicism men have such a pronounced inner aversion to everything that is not reserved and cool, but expresses itself loudly and exuberantly, and that for this reason the English will never take any but a critical attitude toward the essence of the Baroque. For the people on the continent of Europe, however, the time has gone by when men considered Baroque as tantamount to bombast

[1] See Heinrich Woelfflin, *Barock und Renaissance*, second edition, p. 10 (Munich, 1907).

and decadence, lack of spirit and intellect. Not only has the science of history long since renounced such frivolous and precipitate æsthetic judgments, because it strives solely for the understanding of historical developments—*i. e.*, for an objective understanding of a result on the basis of the conditions of its growth—but also the lovers of art have wholly altered their judgment on the nature and value of Baroque in the last twenty-five years. They admire to-day the copious fantasy, the inner greatness, and the exuberant profusion of mental brilliance that manifests itself in the art of that epoch. By retaining the old name, however, while thus altering the total conception, one not only set aside the old opprobrious connotation, but replaced the old negation by a positive appreciation. By the term Baroque, therefore, we understand to-day something that has absolutely nothing to do with the original sense of the word, something that is indeed the direct opposite of it.

But the word Baroque also refers in our day to something quite different. Modern methods of art-history have taught us that what we call the style of an epoch is at bottom the ultimate formula to which we can reduce the specific spiritual bearing of that epoch and its corresponding forms of artistic expression; in other words: what we call the style of the seventeenth century is the common denominator to which the various artistic expression-modes of that age can be reduced. Of course we can only make an adequate analysis of this style by disregarding all apparent antitheses and contradictions between the several arts and artist-personalities, and take the *whole* into consideration, that is at least all the painting, the architecture, and the sculpture of a given age. Now those critics who introduced the word

Baroque in the eighteenth century had nothing but architecture in mind. The definition of its characteristics, consisting of nothing but negations, would naturally not apply to contemporaneous painting as well. To-day, when we have learned to view the artistic utterances of an epoch as a whole, we have learned how to reduce even such contrasts as the Italian sculptor-architect Bernini and the Dutch *genre*-painter Terborch to a single formula: the formula "Baroque."

To what an extent, by the way, the designation Baroque, instead of expressing the least reproach, has also come to be a designation for that which is progressive, free, and great, is evident from the fact that we now trace the Baroque back to the great pathfinders of the sixteenth century, to Correggio, Michelangelo, and the aged Titian. Any one who refers to-day to a "Baroque personality" is no longer thinking of a representative of the bizarre, overadorned, or ridiculous, but of a typical representative of the mentality of the seventeenth century. We are setting forth Rembrandt as the type. In a study of literary history one could just as well set forth the personality of Shakespeare.

I readily admit that it is a difficult matter to choose one figure to be the sole representative of this age. For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it is relatively easy. For in those centuries only a limited number of masters is well known to us, and compared with the overwhelming mass of Baroque painting that has been preserved, the number of surviving works of the older periods is vanishingly small.

The question upon which our selection depends is of course this: Which of all the many independent, truly great master personalities mirrors most veraciously and

at the same time most comprehensively the spiritual character of the Baroque man? And from this question proceeds at once the further, deeper one, what this character really was. The civilization of the Renaissance was comparatively simple to transcribe; it could be reduced to a formula. The civilization of the Baroque period is so widely ramified in its impulses and operations that it seems almost impossible to find any common denominator for it.

What is usually present to our minds when we speak of the "Baroque" is first of all: unprecedented theatrical pomp and splendor. An orgy of colors and light, glaringly reflected from the polished marble armor of spacious colonnaded halls. The *roi soleil* as Apollo in bronze greaves and full-bottomed wig, studded with gold and purple, overshaded with ostrich feathers; his entire princely household round about him on the mirror-like parquetry in theatrical get-up as representing the retinue of the Olympian god. The palace of Versailles. The resplendent gardens of Le Nôtre. On the miles of mathematically straight canals, luxurious gondolas. Crystal state-carriages drawn by twelve horses on the avenues. Stiltedly ceremonious dance-music. Ciceronian speeches.

Or: Resplendent in white marble, a copy of the Jesuitical mother-church in Rome, the cathedral at Salzburg, mightier than any other Baroque edifice of its day on Austrian soil, has been completed by Santini Solari; it is being consecrated. Priests in gorgeous robes are officiating at the high altar. Incense from a thousand censers beclouds the minds of the many princes, great lords, and ladies in the nave. But round about, from the choir to the main portal, a vast scaffolding has been erected, tightly packed with hundreds of singers and instrumen-

tal players. Orazio Benevoli has composed a mass in honor of the day, a tonal structure of such dimensions as had never been heard of before. Twelve choirs, each consisting of singers, organ, and orchestral accompaniment, constitute the musical ensemble. The space becomes music, and the music becomes space. The interior of the church is conceived of as a section of the universe. Every bit of melody is carried by angel-voices to every corner of the room and awakens echoes and reverberations from all directions, from the heights and from the depths. Emerging incessantly from every quarter, the voices answer each other, interweave, are repeated in ever farther and farthest echoes. Then all at once all twelve choirs burst forth in unison: "*Una sancta catholica ecclesia!*"

A conception of the Baroque that confined itself to such examples would be one-sided and superficial; we must call up other images, in order to visualize the phenomenon in somewhat greater completeness. In England, at about the same time, Thomas Hobbes is teaching that religion is "governmentally recognized superstition." What a contrast! And yet another: the armies of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden are raging across Europe, in order to enforce the faith of Martin Luther against the Holy Roman Church, which the emperor is defending. For thirty years war rages over this conflict and transforms wide and blooming fields into smoking heaps of ashes. Such contrasts define the picture of the Baroque. But there are still other, greater ones.

While on the one hand a mediæval mysticism is flowering out in the wildest extremes, so that men and women, revered as saints by folk and church, dream in mystic ecstasies that angels descend from Heaven and pierce their hearts with the arrow of divine love (Santa

Theresa of Spain), in Holland René Descartes, the philosopher, is clearing away, once and for all, the doctrines of mediæval scholasticism. Scientific realism, the coolest scrutiny of scepticism, blossom side by side with miracles and the hysterical intoxication of saints. John Napier of Merchiston devises logarithms, Guericke invents the air-pump and the electric machine, Toricelli the barometer; in Holland the microscope is invented. Newton discovers the law of gravitation.

It will be seen from the few facts that have been cited: this century was so full of the most intense contrasts and contradictions that it is not easy to find a unifying formula for it.

But in one point, it seems to me, the contradictions of the century unite to a certain degree. Complex as everything appears at first glance, at the bottom of all these forms of life lies the same incredibly simple, uncomplicated realism. Scientific criticism is not by mere accident so important a constituent of seventeenth-century civilization. Nothing rests more firmly on sheer objectivity than the political system of Louis XIV, the most subtly and perfectly centralized system of government that has perhaps ever existed. A similar example of highly objective organization is afforded by the system of the *Societas Jesu*, the Order of the Jesuits, so important for the civilization of the Baroque age. There is embodied in its founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, in the most dazzling manner the complete fusion of mysticism, miracle-faith, and a highly practical worldly realism. But one can easily see how Jesuitism and the art of the century are in the strictest agreement as to their objective realism if we think on the one hand, for example, of the startling approximation to reality with which

painters like Rubens, Poussin, or Ribera paint such complicated psychological processes as the martyrdom of a saint, in a manner that puts in the shade anything that Renaissance art had accomplished in similar cases, and on the other hand the *Exercitia spiritualia* of Loyola, in which we find the counsel that the faithful are to call to mind, in their spiritual contemplations, all events related by the legends or the Holy Scriptures in the strictest possible accordance with reality and down to the smallest detail. The description which the above-named Spanish nun Theresa de Jesus gives in her writings of her celebrated "ecstasy"[2] is not one whit inferior, with respect to a realism that borders on pathological perversion, to Bernini's famous marble embodiment of the same subject in Santa Maria della Vittoria at Rome, which has been reproached with its "revolting degradation of the supernatural."[3]

The way in which the thinking of the founder of the Jesuit Order reached out in a practical and realistic fashion even beyond all the bounds of present-day morality is sufficiently evident from his notorious principle that to the end of establishing the sole dominion of the Roman church by the conversion of heretics and heathens every means is sanctified, even deception, intrigue, and the unhesitating adaptation of the converting agents to the weaknesses and sinful inclinations of those whom they are to convert. When we speak, as we often do, of a revival of mediæval mystic-religious tendencies in the seventeenth century, at least we ought not to forget the one mighty difference, namely that world-*dominion*, with the aid of the most objective and practical devices, was

[2] See *Las obras de la S. Madre Teresa de Jesus.*
[3] The critic in this case is Jacob Burckhardt in the *Cicerone.*

the dominant ideal of the monastic orders of the Baroque age just as much as complete world-*flight* had been the ideal of the monks of the Middle Ages. The divinely supernatural, which the mediæval sculptures and paintings had endeavored to emphasize, has therefore been *realized* and *incarnated* in Baroque art. The churches of the seventeenth century no longer desire, like the mediæval ones, to arouse the impression of world-remote solemnity and sublimity, but desire on the contrary to be wholly terrestrial halls of splendor, as it were Heaven on earth.

Is it so very difficult to see what a broad bridge leads from this type of realism to the realism of Shakespearian character-delineation, by the side of which everything that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had proudly called "realism" likewise pales into mere formalism? Calderon, the great Spanish poet, was certainly a passionate Catholic, a true disciple of the Jesuits; but how completely does his religiosity unite with the hearty joy in life of the hot-blooded Spaniard. And Cervantes, his fellow countryman, is so securely anchored in his realistic philosophy that he can even laugh merrily at his own age and its people. In painting it is still more so: the wholly unprecedented, utterly insatiable, purely objective joy in the diversity of this world's manifestations, and in the new capabilities which artistic technic has achieved—here it is that even such opposites as the Eclectics of the school of Bologna, the Carracci, Reni, and Domenichino, find common ground with the Dutch painters.

But as for the last-named in particular, it is as if the most celebrated masters of art knew no other task than the purely objective and most perfect reproduction of

life in all its possible forms. If any one of the sixteenth-century painters had had at his command such a masterly technic as Frans Hals or Velazquez, who overcame all difficulties with playful ease, how he would have displayed that technic, what a boast he would have made of it! But with these matter-of-fact people of the seventeenth century, all technic hides modestly behind the purpose in view. With what infinite simplicity and without any bombast, though with unprecedented technical mastery, does Velazquez paint any one of those monstrous costumes of the Spanish royal court, or Frans Hals the weapons of a Dutch *arquebusier* in the sparkling gleam of their burnished steel, and with all the delicacy of their damascened pattern! Such achievements are done offhand and without braggadocio; the joy in the doing and in the possibility of accomplishing such a result was the reward of these painters.

Rembrandt seems to me that one among the masters of this century in whose art the spiritual content of the Baroque period reveals itself as most concentrated and unadulterated; he is the only one, so far as I can see, whose art does not merely stress one phase of the many-sided Baroque, but spans all the heights and depths, all the contrasts and contradictions of this civilization. All the complex radiations of the spiritual nature of his time converge in his art as in a concave mirror.

Rembrandt's art is commonly regarded as the purest type of most uncompromising realism. And that is to a certain extent true. In his Biblical narratives, a shadowy, legendary past becomes immediate present. No painter or engraver before Rembrandt brought home to us so convincingly and vividly the human veracity of the sacred legends. The psychological deepening of the in-

terpretation goes naturally hand in hand with a wholly unprecedented external description of visible things. Rembrandt depicted Nature with sober objectivity and without disguise, just as she stood before him, and regarded reality as the one proper schoolmistress. He declined to undertake the customary study-trip to Italy, because he feared that his objectivity might be impaired by doctrines and theories. As for Jan van Eyck, so there was for him neither beautiful nor ugly Nature: there was only true Nature. Other theories than those which his own eyes gave him he would not recognize. In his early stages painting seems to have meant to him: to take the model under the microscope, as it were, and to put it on the canvas with all its chance forms, its big and little wrinkles, with an accuracy that attained to absolute illusion. With wholly perfect objectivity he painted silk, satin, fur, coarse or fine cloth, linen, veils, lace, jewels, polished weapons; and at the same time he by no means neglected the spiritual reproduction of the model.

His color-vision was excessively sensitive. He observed tonal differences between shades of color that one can only designate as quarter-tones. His power of distinguishing color-values led to the discovery of wholly undreamed-of visibility-values.

That is one side of Rembrandt's style.

But Rembrandt was at the same time the master of that celebrated, mystic *chiaroscuro* in which space seems to expand and dilate in yearning, in which crass reality sinks from sight, passes away, to be resurrected again as in a musical transfiguration, as something utterly unreal. Rembrandt's *chiaroscuro*, like the glowing symbols of his colors, has nothing at all to do with the reality of things.

Rembrandt was also the poet, or rather the prophet of light. Not of the light that clings to the object, that illumines it and rounds it off, not of the light as reproductive medium, but of the light that is itself a personality, of the light that shines, that prophesies, that is the hero of the drama.

With all of this, it seems to me, Rembrandt spans the Baroque in its entire extension and complexity more completely and more perfectly than any contemporary. Rembrandt's art includes: the coolly scientific spirit of the Baroque, the Baroque of Descartes and the microscope; the Protestant Baroque of Gustavus Adolphus—after all, he was the first to create the pure Protestant type of Bible-illustration; the Catholic Jesuitical Baroque, to which corresponds the mysticism of his *chiaroscuro* and his glowing gold-tones, the mood of the inconceivable and of ecstatic visions. Also of the splendor-loving festivals and the sight-seeing curiosity of his epoch one will feel a strong reflection in the flaming reds and yellows of his palette, as well as in the pomp of his scenes and costumes.

But Rembrandt is also the only one of his century in whose art painting and graphic skill play an equally important part. He was an etcher, not as a secondary but as a principal calling. In his etchings he carried the old "Gothic" art of the abstract black-white to a height that it has never since attained. In his graphic works, perhaps even more than in his painting, his art spans the two opposite poles of the Baroque: its purely objective realism and its pure symbolism.

There are two considerations which more than any others furnish the proof that Rembrandt's art really embraced the full span of the Baroque problems.

The first one lies in the fact, so tragic for Rembrandt himself, that his own fellow countrymen very soon ceased to understand him. Had he continued to speak "good Dutch" in his painting, as he did in his first phase—that is, to paint nothing but pictures of the technically perfect but uninspired type of his portraits of honest citizens from the period of the thirties, then he would indeed have remained for life the most esteemed artist of Amsterdam, as he was even then, but in the history of art he would then have had importance only as a representative of the local Dutch Baroque. He had first to extend his grasp to other spheres of Baroque art before he could be accepted in a wider sense as the representative of the entire style.

This took place in the forties, when he began to paint those most poetic colored scenes in *chiaroscuro*, landscapes, episodes, and portraits, of which latter group the "Night Watch" (62) is probably the most famous. The wording of the order for this picture, following a formula that had been used dozens of times before, was that the members of a shooting-club were to be portrayed in one group. Since Rembrandt's rapid development had by that time hurried him far beyond the limits of the specific art of Holland, he was obviously no longer able to do justice to the simple task in the simple traditional manner. Problems of a higher kind were occupying him at that time: coloristic problems, such as were busying the contemporaneous artists of Venice and Madrid; the problem, for example, of being able to develop colors, like musical tones, from each other, the problem of color-orchestration, as it were. So it came about that Rembrandt made of this matter a grandiose narrative painting, a drama in colors, full of inner tension. How

he drowned the meaningless faces of the Amsterdam shooting-club in the waves of his yellow and red *chiaroscuro!* Velazquez, the painter of the "Surrender of Breda," might have understood him; also Tintoretto;

62. REMBRANDT
The Night Watch, 1642, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

for what Rembrandt had painted there, this whole speech and emotion, was much more like the Spanish and Venetian Baroque than the Dutch. But the men of Amsterdam simply could not follow him any more. It is common knowledge how the catastrophic circumstances that accompanied the order for the "Night Watch" and its execution led to Rembrandt's social ostracism, and eventually to his financial ruin.

It is primarily the fact that by this time Rembrandt had ceased to talk Dutch in his art, and the consequent lack of understanding on the part of his fellow countrymen—it is these facts that permit a deduction as to how comprehensive Rembrandt's style was.

A still stronger proof, however, of the claim that Rembrandt was really the chief exponent of Baroque painting is found in the fact that his development, which pressed ever forward with enormous rapidity, shot out during the fifties, in many respects, far beyond the limits of the general evolution of the Baroque style. Now it might be conceivable, to be sure, that the artistic problems with the unprecedentedly bold solution of which Rembrandt absolutely anticipated certain achievements of late nineteenth-century painting were not rooted at all as such in the art of the seventeenth century. Rembrandt would in that case probably deserve to be called something like a foreteller or prophet, but not an exponent of the art-will and the seeing of his day. For our discussion it is therefore of decisive importance that Rembrandt, when he pressed forward to the impressionistic, indeed even to the expressionistic stage, took as his sole starting-point those possibilities that were already implicit in the highly developed painting of the Baroque, even though more or less germinal and latent. His stupendous creative imagination foresaw these problems of which no one else was aware, and at the same time recognized the possibility of carrying them forward to a satisfactory solution. Thus he remained, in all that he did, firmly grounded in the plane of his age. That his age no longer understood him, that the old painter, whom they looked upon as an eccentric, was finally quite forgotten, not to be really discovered again until

the normal course of development in painting finally landed the others at the very spot where he had cast anchor centuries before, that is not especially to be wondered at, in view of the imperfection of the human understanding. There is something tragic about it, to be sure, which we recognize when we ask ourselves: where might we be in art to-day if there had been more painters in that day with the wakefulness and creative power of Rembrandt, if they had had the ability to carry to further perfection the possibilities that had been created by Rembrandt's revolutionary creations? Whatever of new and healthy achievements have entered into painting from the time of Rembrandt down to the present day—I can find nothing that was not already apprehended as a problem, and advanced toward its solution in the most modern sense, by Rembrandt.

Etchings such as the "Golfers" (1654) (63) anticipate the style of Edouard Manet. The pure retina-impression of a dusk-filled room, with a man sitting at the window, seen against the blinding sunlight outside, with the players moving about in it, is caught with perfectly correct assignment of values in a few suggestive sets of strokes. Like so many similar studies of the Impressionists, this plate commonly interests the artist more than the layman; for it is no more than a bold study of a purely artistic problem. Rembrandt seeks to attain a maximum of dazzling sunny brightness with the scanty luminosity of which, at best, a white sheet of paper is capable. As if he were a pupil of the Impressionists of the nineteenth century, he lets us perceive of the figures outside only a flat flicker of loose, merely suggested outlines. The impression given corresponds exactly to that which our eye would receive if we looked

from a dimly lighted room out into the dazzling world without. Rembrandt had observed that in that case all modelling is wiped out. Quite in the manner of Impressionism, even the window-frame, wherever it is opposed to the light, is, as it were, eaten up by it. The gray

63. REMBRANDT
The Golfers, etching, 1654.

shadows of the inside walls are spotted all over with flickering lights, and on the clothing and the face of the man on the window-bench there is the play of quivering reflections.

The problems which Rembrandt attacked here were really in the air. The Baroque painting of Spain and Italy, and particularly graphic art, had occupied itself intensively ever since the end of the sixteenth century with the study of "high lights." The form-destroying propensity of the sunlight had been discovered, and men had learned to intensify its brilliancy by scattering black

spots, quite without transition, over the otherwise bright surface of the picture. Caravaggio, the Neapolitan realist, studied this phenomenon in etching with great enthusiasm. (64.) But dazzling as were the effects he secured, yet he could no more free himself from the

64. CARAVAGGIO
Peter Denies the Lord, etching, 1603.

fundamental modes of seeing of the sixteenth century than all the others. Rembrandt alone, when he attacked the problem, took this decisive step, namely: he distinguished at the very outset, and on principle, between two things: What do we *know* empirically about things, and, what do I *see* when I fix my eyes on things under definite forms of illumination. Rembrandt is the only one who consistently thinks the problem through to the end, and who therefore arrives logically at the pure reti-

nal-spot-composite of the Impressionists, two hundred years before it was officially discovered.

Another and still bolder example is the etching "Men Bathing." (65.) The knowledge of the plastic shape, which makes Caravaggio's, Reni's, and indeed even

65. REMBRANDT
Men Bathing, etching, 1651.

Velazquez's nudes appear to a certain degree heavy and isolated, is in this plate vaporized, as it were, in the dazzling brightness. The bodily structure of the nudes as such is hardly recognizable, they are so dripping with light. All the visible forms, as in a drawing by Cézanne, are joined into a pattern of ragged spots. Nothing is detached, everything is in flux.—How far in the rear,

after all, lies the sixteenth century! Side by side with this vital experience of a bath in the white heat of a summer noon, how trivial seems Dürer's experiencing of the cool shade of the forest and the sunlight on the heights, of which we spoke in the preceding chapter! And yet that was only 150 years before. The theory later defended by the Impressionists, that in a drawing the point is to leave out everything that does not form an indispensable part of the optical impression, was set forth in practice by Rembrandt with all its consequences. Even Cézanne could not have said the like with a still greater economy of graphic media.

In certain schools of the Baroque, however, there were also the rudiments of that which to-day we call Expressionism: of that art-mode which reached its final absurd conclusions in Cubism, in which we have come to recognize a reaction, historically necessary, to be sure, but most unenjoyable, against the destruction of solid forms by Impressionism.

Among the older forerunners of Expressionism, it is customary to name El Greco (1547-1614), because this most self-willed master would sacrifice, for the sake of particular moods, objective veracity toward Nature to a subjectively distorted contour and a subjectively intensified coloring. In the last analysis, El Greco was a Gothic, who, with the Gothic will to ornamental abstraction as his starting-point, combined the color of his master Tintoretto—itself admittedly somewhat expressionistic—with the expressive devices of the Gothic. We do not know whether Rembrandt knew any works of the master of Toledo. But even in the art of his own immediate country, in the paintings of Hieronymus

Bosch van Aeken, a painter of the sixteenth century, and in the landscapes of his contemporary and fellow countryman, Hercules Seghers, Rembrandt could find expressionistic elements. Above all, however, he himself was of course acquainted with the Gothic style itself, particularly with German graphic art. He had studied Dürer's, Cranach's, Baldung's, and Altdorfer's woodcuts and etchings. In the expressionistic curvatures and the ornamental spirit of these masters we might therefore expect to recognize the most effective of the sources from which he took the inspiration for the solution of expressionistic problems.

On the other hand, again, this is a characteristic fact; none of all those who may possibly have served him as source had probably ever thought of the bold conclusions which Rembrandt drew from them. As far as the problems of expressionism are concerned, he advanced in a single rush to the level of Edvard Munch and Pablo Picasso.

The etching "Twelfth Night" (66) might easily have been by Paul Gauguin, the expressionistic narrator of exotic and primitive conditions. Like a child's windmill, in such childlike naïveté hangs the pointed star of the three kings, white on a black ground. The few recognizable profiles are drawn as by a child in stiff, angular straight lines. Whatever else in the way of figures is indicated as present in the space has become a faintly vibrating geometric pattern. An exotic tapestry.

Of the last state of the etching "The Three Crosses" (67) it may be confidently asserted that it outstrips everything that modern expressionism has so far attained. Of the four surviving states of this plate, even the first was sufficiently expression-laden. Nevertheless,

66. REMBRANDT
Twelfth Night, etching, *ca.* 1652.

it was still a "picture" in the older sense; now it is something else. It seems to me quite misleading when this state is analyzed in accordance with the old principles of a Nature-resembling pictorial narrative. Steeply

67. REMBRANDT
The Three Crosses, etching, final state, *ca.* 1655.

falling showers of light between vertical black walls; that which in the former states of the same etching was still the description of a natural phenomenon is now a purely geometric surface-pattern, reality-free. A regular right-angled and straight-lined pattern divides the entire picture into two transverse and three vertical bands. The throng on the hill has likewise been submerged in a tangled web of lines which speaks henceforth only as

such. The standard of measure for the few figures which have been left recognizable varies, not in accordance with the perspective distances, but rather according to subjective discretion; that which is spiritually important appears large, that which is spiritually unimportant, small—a practice which recurs frequently in Gothic painting. The straight-lined, right-angled outline of figures under the cross recalls somehow the primitive fetiches of a South Sea islander, and one reminds himself at the same time that the works of that most primitive sculpture have likewise exerted a deeper and more stimulating influence upon the Expressionists of the present than for instance the best and Nature-truest sculptures of the Renaissance. In the lower left foreground—without any intelligible meaning, and evidently only to produce a still crasser contrast with the rigid regularity of the verticals and horizontals—a quantity of diagonal strokes are dragged across the picture. That nobody of Rembrandt's age followed him on this road is perfectly obvious. After all, it is only the other day that we who are now living had our eyes and senses adjusted to the understanding of these late works of Rembrandt.

II

Few people realize clearly that much in our present relation to the visible world and its combinations would simply not exist without the intermediation of Rembrandt's art, which revealed the world to us in a wholly new light. We have forgotten that we owe to Rembrandt's art more than the mere æsthetic delight of the eye. Through the fateful, purely æsthetic doctrine of the late nineteenth century which culminates in

the slogan "Art for art's sake," and in the postulate "The goal of art is enjoyment," our relation to Rembrandt among others had sunk for a long time into a sort of critical satisfaction with the excellent taste of his color-schemes, and with his "interesting" technic. Only gradually have we learned to appreciate *all* of Rembrandt, not only the exquisite painter but also the interpreter and discoverer of new relationships within the Cosmos. Rembrandt's art is in truth a power in the evolution of our present-day civilization which we can no more imagine away than we can the art of Shakespeare or Goethe. Where would our perception of the human soul be without him?

"Superior to all other painters in the native delicacy and keenness of his optical observations, he understood and followed in all its consequences the truth that for the eye the entire essence of a visible object consists in 'spots,' that moreover the simplest color is infinitely composite, that every visual sensation is a work of its components and their environment, that every object in the field of vision is only a spot conditioned by other spots, and thus that the most important living thing in any painting is the colorful, vibrant, ever-present atmosphere, in which the figures are immersed like fish in the sea. He made this atmosphere palpable, he revealed to us its swarming, mysterious life; he impregnated it with the light of his native land, a feeble and yellowish illumination like that of a lamp in a cellar; he felt the painful struggle which it wages with the shadow, the exhaustion of the rarer beams that die away in the gloom, the tremulousness of the reflections that cling in vain to the shining walls, and all that vague multitude of half-shadows which, invisible to the ordinary glance, appear

in his paintings and etchings like a subterranean world viewed through the abyss of the waters. Upon emerging from this darkness, the full light was to his eyes as a blinding torrent of rain; he felt it like flashes of lightning, a magic effulgence, or like a sheaf of gleaming darts. Thus he discovered in the inanimate world a most perfect and most expressive drama, all contrasts and all contradictions, whatever is most crushing and mortally sorrowful in the night, whatever is most evanescent and melancholy in ambiguous shadow, whatever is most violent and irresistible in the eruption of daylight."[4]

Rembrandt was the first to let us look into man, as it were, through the surfaces of his physical forms; he snatched away the concrete boundary-walls which had hitherto veiled the inner man, so that we now became capable of visualizing the complex clockwork of the psyche. The Renaissance knew man, so to speak, only with respect to his physical, spatial, external forms. In comparison with Rembrandt's portraits the stylistic distinctions which we might possibly make between the portrait-conceptions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are of little importance; for whether the fifteenth century thought of the head as a more or less exhaustive enumeration of all the accidental external visible characters of the model, or whether the sixteenth century preferred, in the interest of an intenser spiritual expression, a stricter selection of the essential features—in both cases the artists of the Renaissance restrict themselves, after all, to the mere recording of the surfaces, the bodily limits, the typical facial expression. What we learn from the portraits of Raphael, and indeed even from

[4] Taine, *Philosophie de l'Art.*

those of Titian, with regard to the character of the persons portrayed, is essentially restricted to the typical

68. HANS HOLBEIN, JR.
Portrait of the Merchant Gisze, 1532, Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

and universal, to that which can be imparted with the limited means of a painting that only determines the external features. In Rembrandt's portraits we hearken

to disembodied things, to that which whispers and murmurs beyond those surfaces that are but breathed upon the canvas, to that which seems to be almost immaterial.

69. REMBRANDT
Portrait of Nicolaes Bruyningh, 1652, Cassel, Picture Gallery.

In the gallery at Cassel, famous for its Rembrandt treasures, hangs the portrait of Nicolaes Bruyningh (69), done in 1652. If we compare any earlier portrait by a master—let us say Holbein's Berlin portrait of the merchant Gisze (68)—with this by Rembrandt, we shall feel

the above-indicated distinction in conception and execution with the utmost clearness. Rembrandt was the first to seize in his model the specifically modern conception of man, the intangibly fluid spiritual compositeness that Holbein's material speech failed to express. Rembrandt's brush simply does not attempt to set forth the figure of his model in all its expanse, and with the same clarity at all points. He merely extracts from the whole a few accents—the head, and a tiny bit of the cuff that half conceals the right hand—and just barely hints at all the rest, as if it were of little moment. But in that which is merely hinted at there is likewise a stirring of something that the incredibly animated expression of the face brings to complete life and strength: the nervous tension of a clever man who is listening to the remarks of another, and in whose swiftly reacting brain, even while the other is still speaking, the objection, the rejoinder is all ready. The leaning of the body on the chair-arm, this wholly accidental, immediately alterable pose, this was in itself something quite new in the history of portrait-painting; it affords the key to that which we shall find in the face.

Despite the fact that all the light is concentrated on the movable surface of the face, here too there is no form that is held prisoner by definitive unalterable lines. Everything is in flux; lights and shades flit about, transient and intangible; especially above the mouth is there such a play of them that we feel as if all the forms were in constant motion, as if the figure were alive. What portrait of the older time could thus impart to us the impression of a vivacious personality? And it is strange: experience shows that such a portrait, every time we see it afresh, has something new to say about

the person. When we first make the acquaintance of Nicolaes Bruyningh, we are delighted with him and think we know him through and through. When we meet him the second time, he seems to be a totally different person. His mental mobility has a changeable quality, something like the atmosphere in which he seems to float (to use the shop-talk of the studio). On a dark day the colors refuse to wake up entirely, in the sun they sparkle and vibrate, giggle together, and then the man seems to be quite another fellow than he was the day before. Let no one object that such a purely external circumstance as the influence of the lighting in the gallery on the picture permits the drawing of no deductions touching Rembrandt's description of the personality. Quite the contrary. Holbein's or Raphael's portraits will look perhaps less shiny and splendid in bad weather than in good light; their decorative effect demands a favorable illumination. But the physiognomy of the older portraits, I mean their lines, the modelling, and their pattern, remains unchanged. Rembrandt's people, like living men, have a temperament that changes with rain and sunshine.

This is indubitably connected, to be sure, with their technic. But the still visible, rhythmically organizing brush-stroke and the flaky application of color, to which this mood-shifting influence of the illumination is to be ascribed . . . this technic, which has shaken off all the fetters of the old boundary-lines, was itself, after all, only the product of a deeper, more sensitive seeing.

The statement that Rembrandt has helped essentially to give our viewing of the world—the accent on viewing —its present-day stamp is moreover by no means valid

only as regards purely spiritual matters, such as the conception and interpretation of the human psyche, but is also to be understood quite literally. What our present physical visual ability, what our sensory relation to visibility, owes to our schooling through the sensitized organs of Rembrandt is indeed immense. Hippolyte Taine has described this service of Rembrandt, better than I could do so, on a truly classic page of his *Philosophie de l'Art*.

"Freed from all bondage and guided by the superlative sensibility of his organs, Rembrandt was able to represent in man: not only the universal structure and the abstract type, which is sufficient for classic art, but also the peculiarities and deeps of the individual, the infinite and inextricable entanglements of the moral personality, the whole of that changeable imprint which concentrates instantaneously upon a face the entire history of a soul, and which Shakespeare alone perceived with equally prodigious clairvoyance. In this he is the most original of modern artists, and forges one end of the chain of which the Greeks fashioned the other; all the other masters, Florentines, Venetians, Flemings, are connecting links, and if to-day our overstimulated sensibility, our extravagant curiosity in the pursuit of subtleties, our relentless search for the true, and our divination of the remote and the obscure in human nature, seeks after forerunners and teachers, then it is in him and in Shakespeare that Balzac and Delacroix can find them."

III

The evolution of Rembrandt's spiritual personality is mirrored in the mutation of his optics.

Rembrandt was from first to last, it is true, a fully developed, wholly independent personality. One will easily recognize a work by him, after one has studied intelligently a few others, amid a mass of other masterpieces; there is always his personally colored voice and speech, no matter whether the work in question belongs to his early, middle, or final period. But within the boundaries of this personal unity, Rembrandt's conception of the importance and the goals of his art did undergo a constant transformation, and indeed in a very rapid tempo, and a very decided manner. The Rembrandt of the last phase, despite his unalterable voice, is nevertheless a wholly different person from young Rembrandt. This constant decay of superseded views, and the constant development of new ones—Rembrandt's evolution —is consummated with an astounding inner consistency. If we survey it as a whole, it consequently seems as if he had steered from the very beginning on a clearly marked course toward a definite, predetermined goal, and as if all the mutations of his style were but the result of overcoming certain difficulties that had placed themselves in his way. Naturally nobody thinks seriously that young Rembrandt foresaw what old Rembrandt would desire. Developments like that of Rembrandt always take place more or less in the realm of the unconscious.[5] However that may be, the steadiness of Rembrandt's development, regulated by the always unvaryingly high ethical con-

[5] Whoever has seen an artist at work knows how he is wont to wrestle with his ideal, which does indeed float before his mind, but rarely makes an immediate and definite appearance. When the work is finally completed, it is customary to say that the artist *wanted* this, or he *wanted* that. So too we speak, with reference to great art-epochs, of the art-*will* of the epoch. In reality, however, the artist knows but very rarely what he will, and certainly not until it stands before him on the canvas, as the result of protracted reorganizations and alterations. These continued alterations were undertaken because he did not like what he had painted first. So he did not know exactly *what* he wanted, but he did know perfectly that he did *not* want

sciousness of the artist and his never-wavering loyalty to himself, is a fact to be reckoned with, and if we follow to-day in retrospect the creative labors of Rembrandt through the four decades of his career, then a pellucid image of his soul is afforded us in the evolution of his style, especially when we collect into chronological series those of his pictures which are inwardly akin by virtue of their special form-problems or their particular subject-matter, then it not only seems as if each successive picture had proceeded logically from the foregoing conception, but also as if the alterations which can be observed in the second picture were an outgrowth of Rembrandt's self-criticism, that is, as if Rembrandt, after new possibilities of expression had dawned upon him in the meantime, had wished to improve on himself.

Let us make the attempt to study Rembrandt's growth, on the basis of this comparative method. The wonderful portrait of Rembrandt's mother in the oval frame (State Gallery, Vienna) (70) represents the loving, supremely precise objectivity that is a characteristic feature of Rembrandt's style during the thirties of the seventeenth century. Realism at that time meant to him to put his art so completely at the service of external reality that the model itself seems to speak from the picture, and that technic is rendered wholly subservient to the representation of the model. If possible, the painter's art was to be prevented from unfold-

what he had painted to start with. What we observe here in an every-day instance seems to me applicable on a large scale, too, with respect to the process of so-called artistic development. The alterations which an artist makes in later years in the earlier drafts of a picture are always the expression of a definitely directed volition, although the will records its choice of a definite goal by the constant elimination of the undesirable. Thus it is in reality a zigzag course consisting of nothing but negations and corrections, but viewed from a far distance the many zigzags form a straight road that leads to a fixed goal.

ing the creative powers peculiar to it. A vast mass of detail is heaped up in this picture. Every little wrinkle in the parchment-like skin is studied separately, as in a still-life; especially the most exhaustively treated regions about the eyes testify to Rembrandt's absolutely astounding miniature-painting. Every bit of the costume is treated with the same loving care, the many pleated folds of the ruff, the tassels on the head-dress, the goldsmith-work of the brooch, the fur. Never have hands been painted truer to life.

About eleven years later, around 1650—that is, at the beginning of his third period—Rembrandt painted the portrait of another old woman, in whom people claim to recognize Elisabeth de Leeuwen, the master's sister-in-law (71); the picture is in the Jules Porgès collection in Paris. In this picture, too, an unlimited realism still seems to be triumphant; nothing has been added, one feels. And yet . . . would Nature, which loves the accidental features of phenomena more than their regularity, ever have been able to give us such a supremely clarified, impressive, and simplified total impression as does this picture? It is as if reality had first had to go through the clarifying filter of Rembrandt's eye, in order to become a definite form. Whereas in the earlier portrait of his mother each little part took its equally important place beside the next, in this portrait of the sister-in-law only the most essential features are assembled with striking decisiveness into a profile of absolutely classic impressiveness; the light concentrated on the surface of the skin focuses the phenomenon once more. One cannot see the forehead without simultaneously taking in its organic connection with nose, mouth, and chin, each of which is laden with a sugges-

tive force of expression that was completely lacking in the previous picture. It would be hard to reproduce that early picture of the mother from memory. There is so

70. REMBRANDT
Portrait of the Artist's Mother, 1637, Vienna, State Gallery.

much depicted in it, and the much is subordinated to so few guiding lines, that one soon forgets the whole, or at any rate retains in the memory only a more or less vague conception of something very naturalistic and detailed. But the portrait of Elisabeth de Leeuwen immediately stamps itself unforgetably upon the memory as an entirety.

The difference between the two styles of Rembrandt

71. REMBRANDT

Portrait of Elisabeth de Leeuwen, sister-in-law of the artist, *ca.* 1650, Paris, Jules Porgès Collection.

that find expression in these portraits is significant of the transformation which his attitude toward reality and art had undergone. It is, on a small scale, the same transformation that has been consummated so often and often on a large scale in the history of art, when primitive epochs developed into classic ones. The early style of Rembrandt bears the same relation to his late style as manyness to oneness, as unclarity to the highest clarity. And there is still a further thing to be considered in comparing the two portraits: the difference in Rembrandt's relation to art as a communicator of reality. For Rembrandt in his later period, the visualization of the model appears to have been only conception, impregnation. He gave the phenomenon a new birth; it grew up once more in the peculiar material of his paint and in accordance with the peculiar categories of his art. The reality which he brought forth was no longer the accidental reality of the outer world, but a necessary reality of his inner vision, of his creation.

As is inevitable, this transformation is also mirrored in the spiritual sphere. What Rembrandt's youthfully tempestuous, indeed occasionally crass realism read into the Biblical stories that he embodied in his pictures, again and again, even in later life, is basically different from that which he found in them in his more advanced years, when he reread the same stories with more enlightened mind.

The story of the disciples' meal at Emmaus is one of the tenderest in the New Testament. The two disciples have strolled out to a small inn one evening. Full of sadness that their Master is no longer dwelling among them, they have spoken only of Him, and even when they sit down to their meal their thoughts are full of

Him. And as he had promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"—so it is fulfilled in this case. The Master is all at once at the table with them. The Biblical

72. REMBRANDT
The Supper at Emmaus, 1627, Paris, André-Jacquemart Collection.

story leaves no doubt that the apparition of the Lord was of wholly incorporeal nature. The servant who brings in the food saw nothing of the presence of a third person. In this feature the Bible story has an indescribable softness.

The harshly realistic mind of young Rembrandt, however, wished to make this episode appear as drastic

as possible. Moreover, the young painter—only twenty-four years of age—probably found within himself even then too intense an opposition to the idealizing Italians

73. REMBRANDT
The Supper at Emmaus, 1648, Paris, Louvre.

to permit him to choose a note of sublimity for the scene. His first depiction of the subject (Collection of André-Jacquemart, Paris) (72) shows with what uncompromising concreteness he conceived of the incident. Like a ghost Christ suddenly appears at the table, covering up a light behind him, so that the effect is almost solely that of a silhouette. The ghostly apparition has a cor-

responding effect upon the disciples, depicted as coarse peasants. One of them immediately drops on his knees before the apparition, so violently that the chair on which he has been sitting falls to the ground with a loud crash; the other disciple recoils with that vacant facial expression which is wont to accompany sudden fright in every-day life. The asymmetrical arrangement of the composition increases the obtrusively noisy tone of the picture; in the background the serving-maid is also rattling kettles and pans on the hearth.

In 1648—at the age of 42—he treated the same subject once more (Louvre, Paris). (73.) The poetically transfiguring devices of his style in this middle period put into his hand the possibility of retaining the quiet, ethereal character underlying the Biblical narrative. The episode is no longer located in an inn. The architecture has a certain solemnity. An arched niche reaches to a considerable height, and gives to the transfigured, motionless figure of the Lord a silent sublimity. The niche is broad. Nothing else goes on in it save a soft throbbing of light, the radiation of the halo. The disciples, too, are quiet and deeply touched. So suggestive is the sudden silence of the two guests that the servant in attendance, who does not observe the Lord, only ventures to enter on tiptoe. The three profane figures might have diverted the beholder's attention from the central figure. Formerly Rembrandt would not have heeded this danger; now, in order to avoid it, he places one of the disciples with his back to the spectator, so that the wonderful bright figure of the Lord can reveal itself in perfect purity. Christ is given in the simplest imaginable view—full face—and in the highest light. Rembrandt now bows willingly to the wisdom of a Leonardo, of

whose "Last Supper" the composition contains audible echoes.

Can one go farther in the dematerialization of substance? It seems indeed as if this picture said the last word in respect to grandeur and simplicity and tranquillity. Rembrandt himself, when he painted the same subject for the last time thirteen years later—at fifty-five—thought otherwise. As he now looked back upon his earlier picture, it may well have been that everything in it now seemed to him too corporeal, too little symbolical in the Biblical sense. The picture of about 1661 (also in the Louvre) (74) is really nothing more than light-movement. A still more extreme disembodiment of the principal persons, or of the space which seems to consist of nothing but swaying clouds of golden light, a still more extreme simplification of the outlines, still more extreme masking of the action—it must be admitted that this is inconceivable.

This transformation, which extends throughout the life of Rembrandt, of noise into softness, of complexity into simplicity, of crass realism into symbolism, naturally also exerted a decisive influence upon the solution of certain problems that are essential to the history of art. Not the least of them that of space-presentation, a problem that had given painters no peace since the days of the Renaissance. Baroque style, like that of every preceding epoch, had its own peculiar modes of arranging objects spatially in the picture. The space in the first Emmaus picture, which opens up obliquely into the background, is typical of the spatial ideal of Rembrandt's early period.

Also such a picture as the "Good Samaritan" (etching, about 1633; a similar painting is in the Wallace

74. REMBRANDT

The Supper at Emmaus, 1661, Paris, Louvre.

Collection at London) (75) follows a favorite formula of the time in the fact that the eye is led backward in a spiral, as it were, to reach the figures. The arrangement

75. REMBRANDT
The Good Samaritan, etching, 1633.

of the actors on the stage is at the same time chosen in such a way that the most important persons appear in the background of the picture, not the foreground. The foreground is occupied by a dog—what an obtrusive motif in this narrative!—then comes a boy who holds by the

bridle the horse that projects diagonally into the scene. The horse overlaps for the most part the man who is lifting the injured one from the saddle. Still farther to the rear appears the sick man himself, though seen from behind, so that he has to turn his head back over his shoulder toward the beholder in order to achieve any effect at all. Then when we have climbed, to cap all this, over a little stone wall that blocks our way near the top of the steps, we have finally reached the Samaritan, who, in order to be able to confer with the landlord, is also compelled, unfortunately, to turn his back on the spectator. This persistent inward twist, so to speak, that is forced upon the eye, even strengthened by the oblique position of the tavern-front, from which the gaze slips off, as it were, into the wide-open landscape beyond, has in it, we must admit, a somewhat forced and at the same time artificial quality. Something that does not quite correspond with the elemental simplicity of the Biblical parable.

This spatial formula—quite typical, incidentally, of early Baroque—was wholly abandoned by Rembrandt later on, and evidently for profound reasons. The painting of the "Good Samaritan" (1648, Louvre) (76) is a model of that utterly clear, simple surface-composition which we have already analyzed in the second Emmaus picture (dating from the same year). The effect of the delineation, as it unfolds from left to right, is for one thing so much more impressive than in the etching, because the narrative does not run counter to the picture-surface, as before, but parallel with it. The full impression of a deep, spacious stage, however, has by no means been lost through the planiform disposition. Rembrandt leaves it to the incorporeal evening-glow, that is dream-

ing away in tranquil peace on the tavern wall in the background, to lure our gaze past the quiet train, and on into the distance.

The attempt has so far been made, by reference to a

76. REMBRANDT
The Good Samaritan, 1648, Paris, Louvre.

few examples chosen at random from Rembrandt's early and later periods, to set forth his development in its major features. It is most illuminating for our insight into the inner laws that were operative in this development when we now learn that the same principles which regulate the macrocosm of Rembrandt's entire production recur also in the microcosm of each separate period. About every ten years Rembrandt's development under-

went a decisive change, with a direction toward new goals. Which signified each time, to a certain degree, a recommencement on the new basis. With a personality of such extraordinary consistency as Rembrandt, it was really to be expected from the very outset that within each of these approximately ten-year periods the same thing would be repeated which we have already observed on a large scale in the total course of his development, namely that initial manyness would be transformed into rigid oneness, initial unclearness into clarity, initial complexity into simplicity, and further, that a constant creative intensification of the pictorial expression would take place.

That such was indeed the fact is proven by the landscapes of Rembrandt, which are compressed into a relatively brief period of his life—about 1638-1650. When Rembrandt turned to landscape, he had already outgrown the period of his purely objective realism. He was by that time at the beginning of that period of wildly agitated dramatic color-orchestration which we have already met in the "Night Watch." (62.) That the "Night Watch," growing out of a composite portrait, ultimately became a similar color-fantasia is indeed partly connected with the fact that at that particular time Rembrandt was more of a landscapist than a portrait-painter.

The almost visionary Baroque spirit of the forties, which finds expression in a struggle with the problems of expressive color, of light-rhythm, and of ornamental *chiaroscuro*, explains why the landscapes that Rembrandt painted at that time have so little to do with the conception of landscape-painting that the Dutch had formed. They are not views of certain interesting points,

77. REMBRANDT

The Thunderstorm, 1638, Braunschweig, Picture Gallery.

not prospects of definite cities, river courses, or mountains. They are first of all stirring symphonies in color, without recognizable objective motif, without clear melody. In point of fact, Rembrandt handles his paint

78. REMBRANDT
Landscape with Three Trees, etching, 1643.

in the "Landscape with the Thunderstorm" (1638, Braunschweig) (77) as a composer his masses of tone. Out of the turmoil of darkness and light rises, as the sole structural motif of the picture, a wavelike motion that makes the earth, as well as the tenacious glooms that burden it and the sulphurous lights above it, the optical impression of a joyless, torturing sultriness. Let no one ask where the scene is laid, or whether the like ever occurred anywhere. The picture merely follows the character of a universal mood. What it lacks is a clear

framework and simplicity. It is one of Rembrandt's most *baroque* pictures (to use the term for once in the sense of bizarre).

About five years later he made that etching which likewise depicts a landscape and thunderstorm, one of

79. REMBRANDT
The Windmill, 1650, Philadelphia, Widener Collection.

the most celebrated of Rembrandt's works, "The Three Trees." (78.) The tangled surge of the Braunschweig painting has given way to clear, almost geometric definiteness. The space is not distilled out into a boundless expanse, it separates naturally into simple strata; the group of the three trees, a severely restrained, dominantly vertical silhouette, grows up out of the broad sweep of the horizontal ground at a sharp right angle.

This broad right-angle concentrates at the same time all the principal darknesses of the picture so exclusively that all the rest of the available space, with the exception of the thunder-cloud on the left margin, is reserved for the gamut of the whites. But the departing cloud, from which the rain is still falling, is with strict regularity opposed to the verticals and perpendiculars as a dense mass of diagonals. The developmental road traversed since the Braunschweig painting is inconceivable in its extent.

With such form-clarity as this, which can make out of a chance natural occurrence something like a mighty primitive symbol, Rembrandt finally tackled the landscape portrait. When I say portrait, I am thinking of his later phase, as we know it from the portrait of his sister-in-law, not of his earlier, purely materialistic one.

The famous "Mill" is such a portrait. (79.) But each individual feature of it is obliterated in a generalization that borders on the symbolic. The little building on its exalted foundation affects us like a gigantic monument. It is one eloquent vertical line, massively set off in the simplest of silhouettes by a faintly broken horizontal darkness below, and a corresponding horizontal brightness above. I do not know how one could go any farther in simplification and at the same time in intensification.

But that certain *baroque* pathos that is still eloquent in the "Mill" was likewise stripped from his last landscapes by Rembrandt. The etched "Landscape with Swans" (80) is of an unemotional simplicity that one would scarcely have expected to find in Rembrandt. The three dark horizontal strips of the shore constitute, moreover, together with the delicately outlined moun-

tain for which they serve as foot, an ornamental pattern of such balanced symmetry, that one might safely turn the picture around and stand it on its head without its losing the assured equilibrium of its beautiful design.

80. REMBRANDT
Landscape with Swans, etching, 1650.

The Rembrandt of the last phase is quite unsentimental, and yet his profound inwardness agitates us to the uttermost limits of the endurable. One cannot speak of the works of his last period without having the painted original before one's eyes. For what Rembrandt's later color-expressionism foreboded in the way of expressive possibilities has not been even remotely apprehended by modern Expressionism; its fulfilment will perhaps only be achieved by the painting of the future.

81. REMBRANDT

Self-portrait, 1669, Munich, Old Pinakothek, Carstanjen Collection.

IV

The life of Rembrandt takes us out of the simplicity of a miller's house in Leyden into the wealth and luxury of Amsterdam. The youth of the painter is an exuberant, bliss-drunken Bacchanale in the arms of his adored young wife, the lovely Saskia van Uylenburg. For her he toils, for her he becomes famous, for her he turns spendthrift. Pearls, costly raiment, a residence furnished with all the splendors of the Orient, all this is for her alone. Then came the catastrophe of the "Night Watch." His star paled in the same year. Saskia died, and left him alone with Titus, their little son. We will not search into the truth of gossip to the effect that Rembrandt had spent the money of his wife and son in improper ways. Suffice it to say that his creditors brought suit, that Rembrandt became bankrupt. The neglected man now lives in a dark little room somewhere in a rear apartment near the Ghetto. He has few friends. His faithful housekeeper, Hendrikje, whom he painted so many times, cares for him and his son until she dies; until Titus also sinks into the grave in advance of his broken-hearted old father. While he is creating the overpowering confessions of his old age, he is wholly cut off from friends. He is forgotten.

When he finally died, an inventory of his estate was made. It consisted of a Bible, and some old painting utensils. The last painting he left—the fearful self-portrait of the Carstanjen collection (81)—shows a contorted face, in which the convulsive laughter of despair is stifled by the sobs of the forsaken.

CHAPTER V

ART AND REVOLUTION

In the history of civilization since the close of the Middle Ages, the end of the seventeenth century—at least as regards its external organization—represents a height that was never to be exceeded. A comparison between the Government of France at that time and the Government of Italy at about 1400 will make that clear.

At the beginning of the Renaissance, Italy was a "manyness" of small, independently subsisting states. Republics, margraviates, bishoprics, duchies, the kingdom of Naples, and the Pontifical State constituted an aggregation whose parts were but loosely connected, not even using the same language in all cases. The unit in this diversity was the single individual, who did exactly as he pleased. Now if we cast a glance at the age of Louis XIV (1643–1715) and at France, we see a state of the highest imaginable unity. Its system is a oneness in which each smallest part retains its dependence upon the centre. The principle of the state was absolutistic. The dictum of the king, "*L'état c'est moi*" (I am the state), signifies far more than the interpretation commonly given it as the cynical confession of an arbitrary ruler who reserves the right to decide every question of law or morality in accordance with his own pleasure and caprice; Louis XIV was really—for the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire—the heart of an infinitely ramifying state system, by whom alone

the pulse-beat of administration was regulated, down to the remotest and tiniest arteries.

This absolute oneness, which will tolerate no independent member in the collective organism,[1] was the central concept over the entire field of civilization at the close of the seventeenth century. The idea of a perfectly organized unity determines the thinking and the action of civilized humanity in those days. As in the state and the theory of the state, so it also appears as guiding principle in philosophy, in poetry, in the creative arts, and in music. It would be the function of the universal history of thought to demonstrate how, in all these fields, this oneness developed out of the multifariousness that dominated the civilization of the foregoing epochs.

To imagine the universe as an absolutely unified system, governed by a central force down to the tiniest cogwheel in it, this was the favorite occupation of the thinkers in the seventeenth century, especially toward the close of it. The absolutistic idea and that of oneness plays no less a part in the philosophy of the age than in the theory of the state. In the ideal conceptions of former generations, the universe had consisted of a multiplicity of individual, rather loosely connected parts. For example, even Descartes, the philosopher and physicist (1596–1650), had not been able to see that the force which moves matter might be a part of that matter itself; he had regarded force and matter as two things, and had

[1]To what an extent this absolute subordination of the individual to the whole was also the dominant principle in the system of the Jesuit Order is well known. It was demanded of the members of the Order that they should completely obliterate their own individuality, their subjective will, and that their obedience to the ruling central power should be "*perinde ac si cadaver essent*" (as if they were a lifeless body). Even all relations with father, mother, and sister had to be broken off. A subtly clever system of surveillance insured complete subordination to the absolute unity of the whole.

taught that motion could only take place when a thrust or pressure exerted an influence on matter from without. Isaac Newton (1643–1727), as is well known, refuted this fundamental error of the older physicist by his theory of gravitation; it is typical for Newton, as a representative thinker of the late seventeenth century, that he found unity here where Descartes had seen variety; Newton showed that the force which produces the motion, the force of gravity, is to be thought of as inherent in the matter itself.

But also in the comprehensive philosophical systems of a Spinoza or a Leibniz the idea of a centrally organized unity is the first and final goal of speculation. For Spinoza (1632–77) the universe consists of one single substance. Even in Shaftesbury's theory of the harmony of the universe appears this fundamental idea, this time in the field of moral philosophy. And again, in what is perhaps the most logically consistent systematization of a world-view in the seventeenth century, the idea of perfected oneness appears in the teachings of the great German philosopher, Leibniz (1646–1716). "The engine of things," as he says, "has been devised by the Creator with such infinite wisdom, that it goes on developing of itself in accordance with the laws that have been once and for all implanted in it by Him." Leibniz, who also harbored the idea, it will be remembered, of causing all the Christian faiths on earth to be absorbed by one unifying religion, likewise wished to fuse the last remaining contradictions that might still be left in the world into one perfectly harmonious totality—religion and reason. "The realm of reason and the realm of mercy," as he terms it, "interpenetrate each other at all points, without their laws, however, becoming entangled or dis-

turbing at any time." The idea of the oneness of the universe found its completion in Leibniz's monad theory. In this he attempted to trace the bulk of the material forces of the world back to what he called the all-pervading energy, welding into an indivisible oneness every conceivable individual part. No individual, in the belief of Leibniz, is permitted to go his own way; every "monad" (as he calls the atoms to which the universe is reducible), is dependent, without exemption, upon the creative central power which he defined as the pre-established harmony ruling the universe.

As might be expected, it was the same in the field of art as in that of thought. The idea of oneness, here too, enjoys unlimited dominance. Whoever has once walked between Bernini's colonnades, which surround St. Peter's square in Rome, toward the great church, and has felt in so doing how this immensely capacious architectonic embrace makes the broad square and the mighty church blend into one titanic unity, will understand me. The Renaissance had not yet learned such an encompassment of stupendous dimensions. Only the Baroque could produce that. The organic interrelation of palace and park at Versailles by means of a single perspective depth—the grand canal—that dominates the entire vast area is a still more imposing example of Baroque unification.

Also in this purely artistic field, what the seventeenth century achieved is revealed as the climax of a purposeful development that set in about 1400. All the art of the fifteenth century adhered to detail. Whether it is a question of the equivalent individual features summed up in a portrait or the equivalent successive pillars arrayed in the nave of a church, never is one principal part accentuated and set above the others. This accentuation comes in

with the classic art of the sixteenth century. I have occasionally pointed out how Raphael brings out essential features in his portraits or narrative paintings and thus lifts them above the non-essentials. In architecture, too, the sixteenth century replaced primitive co-ordination by subordination, that is, the multiplicity of forms is now given a structural design and thus comprised in a certain unity. But this unity, in architecture as well as in painting, still consists of utterly independent parts, as is convincingly shown by the frescoes of Raphael or Michelangelo. Hence the "School of Athens" (3) is certainly incomparably more akin to the family scene by Mantegna in the bridal chamber at Mantua (10) than to Rembrandt's "Night Watch," for instance. (62.) In the two Italian paintings each individual figure still asserts its full claim to individual attention; but in Rembrandt's painting all the figures are indissolubly blent with the vibrant light and the shadows; one cannot imagine the people in the background as released from the picture, they are wholly without independence, mere spots or pools in a flood of color which constitutes the indivisible unity of the picture. Mural paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries attempt, moreover, to blur the boundaries between painting and architecture, so that picture and space become one and the same.[2] It is known that beginnings had been made in this direction as early as the fifteenth century. Compared with what the seventeenth century indulges in, however, those modest attempts of Melozzo da Forli are absolutely insignificant. When Pozzo peoples the ceiling of Sant Ignazio in Rome with throngs of saints floating

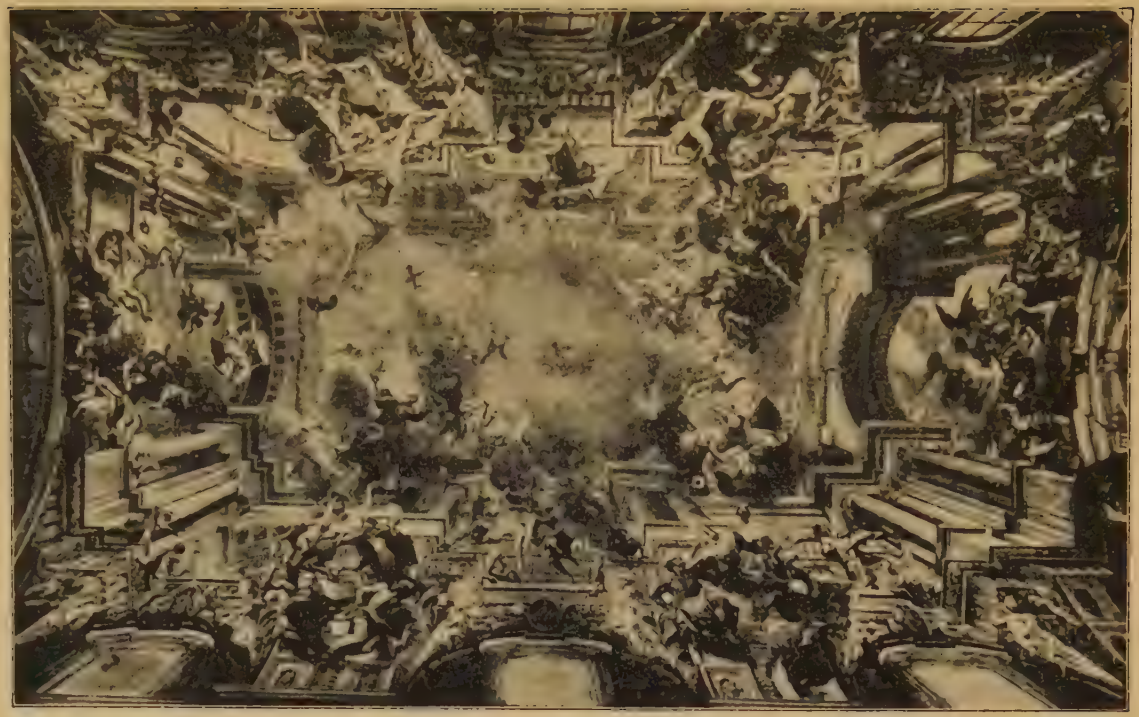
[2] Heinrich Woelfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (München, 1919), has treated exhaustively the development from manyness to oneness in the history of art.

down upon clouds, he projects the actual architectural structure of the church nave into his painting in a baffling fashion, so that the beholder who stands below is quite incapable of judging where the architecture ceases and the painting begins. (82.)

If the attainment of such a perfect formal unity was the ultimate goal of development since the Renaissance, and if in the field of pictorial technic and of the mastery of Nature the last word had been said by Velazquez and in a certain sense by Rembrandt, then what was there left to do in the eighteenth century?

This question must be seriously propounded, for our expectation quite naturally tells us that if the seventeenth century accomplished such immensely important preparatory work for modern art that we feel for the first time in the works of its painters the breath of modern man, then the eighteenth century really ought to be even closer to us. In point of fact, however, that is not the case. And we can only partially explain the stoppage which takes place during the eighteenth century in the art-development that had been proceeding so rapidly since the Renaissance through the fact that the artistic problems set by the Renaissance had actually been solved, at the end of the seventeenth century, in so perfect a manner that there was not much left for the eighteenth century but to rest upon the achievements of the past.

There are to be found in the artistically very talented France, and in the less talented Spain, of the eighteenth century single artists who evolved something quite new and creative from that old legacy. Foremost among these is Francisco Goya (1746–1828), who in his series of etchings, the *desastres de la guerra*, the *caprichos*, and



82. ANDREA DEL POZZO

St. Ignatius Carried into Paradise, *ca.* 1685, Rome, painted vault of St. Ignazio.

in other works, speaks to us as an absolutely modern master of expression; as a master who so far prepared the way of Impressionism that Edouard Manet could begin about 1860 exactly where he left off. But even the subtle light-painting of Francesco Guardi in Venice (1712–93), and the colorism of Fragonard in Paris (1732–1806)—still further preparatory for Impressionism—are not the valid symptoms of a universal progress in painting beyond the stage of the seventeenth century. These few masters do not determine the style of their century; they are isolated phenomena.

Since there was no suitable goal to stimulate development in a straight line, the evolution turned into by-paths. One prominent trait in the art of the eighteenth century is a renewed reminiscence of ancient art. The latter had always been the final refuge, whenever painting did not know just what to do next. Once before, in the sixteenth century, the painting of central Italy had been damaged by excessive obsession with the sculpture of antiquity. It was at that time due to the painting of Venice, as the reader will recall from the first chapter, that the dead art of Greece and Rome was not permanently able to rob the eminently creative art of the day of any of its originality and youthful freshness. In the eighteenth century the situation grows more serious. The creative force of contemporary art had begun to fail. Since no self-created problems urged men forward, they began to cast about for them in the past. They no longer reverted to the naturalism of the Renaissance, they went directly back to Roman antiquity, and inoculated themselves, by embracing more and more fervently a decayed and mouldering art-style, with the germ of death. The end of eighteenth-century art is really an eclipse. How

very true that is will be shown still more clearly by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Heretofore the artists had gone straight ahead naively and with full confidence in their healthy instinct; as the goals of contemporaneous art had always resulted more or less automatically from the longings of the age, there were, up to the seventeenth century, no programmes and no manifestoes, such as we see emerging in growing numbers since the eighteenth century. It is true that now and then in the fifteenth century some picture-buyer had tormented the artists with his special desires and his nagging, it is true that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries academies had imposed upon their members the duty of observing definite rules of art. But in general all these interferences could not disquiet the artists very much, for a universally valid style of presentation was immovably fixed; it underlay both the works of the artists and the critical objections which occasional buyers or academicians found it necessary to make. It would certainly not have occurred to a soul to prescribe for the painter the employment of any other style than the natural style of his age or country. This gradually changed to an increased degree during the eighteenth century, at least as far as painting is concerned. The latter, which unlike architecture and the applied arts narrates happenings and describes objects, was in that day so much the more at a disadvantage with respect to its non-depicting sister arts that the public, with its one-sidedly literary education, began to apply critical standards that were derived less from the nature of drawing and color than from literature. Painting became didactic, the painter's social and ethical opinions became more important than his talent. The subject

chosen by the painter, its ethical content, the moral or psychological interpretation that he had given it—such or similar criteria occupied the foreground almost exclusively in the public criticism of pictures. And for public discussion, now that the exhibition system had come into being, and newspaper comment was all the rage, there was opportunity in abundance. The painters were now told what they should do and what they should not do.

It is very characteristic that architecture, which could not be got at with such literary and ethical criteria, was able to develop with much more freedom, and that especially the applied arts—in furniture, china, silversmithing—for which there were the fewest points of contact with ancient art and about which there was little theorizing in public, had their golden age in the eighteenth century. These lesser artists were not forced, like the painters, to turn their mantle, as we say, to every wind that blew. How much an artist with any degree of weakness in his character could be thrown off the track by having to defer to academic taste, critical taste, and public taste—three very different tastes in the Paris of that day!—is shown with perfect clearness by the case of the painter Greuze (1725–1805). His talent was narrowly limited. In the portrayal of languishing girlish heads, and in half-chaste, half-depraved *genre*-paintings like the "Milkmaid," he gave the best he had. But now Diderot, the then art-pope of Paris, demanded in the criticisms he wrote for the *Salon* that art should cultivate morality and virtue in its works above all else, for thereby it was realizing the only purpose it had, the ethical one. So Greuze painted virtue. He painted one of the tawdriest pictures of the century, the "Village Bride."

(83.) Diderot praised the picture to the skies, the public shouted approval, and the picture was sold to the king for 16,650 livres. But now Greuze wanted to become a member of the Academy. The condition was the submission of a painting, which of course, corresponding to

83. J. B. GREUZE
The Village Bride, 1761, Paris, Louvre.

academic taste, must be "classical." So Greuze painted classically, although he had not the slightest talent for it. And as a result his picture "Septimius Severus and his Son"—he had dug up the subject from a Roman historian—turned out so miserably that after he had been taken into the Academy, and the action could not be reversed, the director drew a pencil from his pocket in the presence of all the members, with Greuze still in the room, and corrected the numerous errors on the can-

vas. Then when the picture was exhibited in the Salon, the critics of course objected to the picture as a whole and in detail. The *Avantcoureur*, for example, enumerated for the painter the things that Poussin would have done differently; he would have done better to follow such an example. Also it was to be censured that since Poussin had placed the hooks on the robes of Roman figures on the right side Greuze had made the gross error of putting them on the left. Whereupon the painter printed a rejoinder in the same journal.

The general public had likewise begun to play a not insignificant part in the art-life of Paris. Both sued for public favor, the critics and the artists. Greuze was wont to announce his works in the newspapers upon their first appearance, with an often very long-winded explanation that flattered the public. When the engraved reproduction of one of his paintings is to appear, he writes in the *Journal de Paris* an announcement: "To the reverend gentlemen of the clergy. There will shortly appear a copper-engraving under the title 'The Widow and her Pastor.' This subject is one of a series of divers character-scenes from life which I have already treated . . . " and after a description which goes into the minutest detail comes the conclusion: "To you, guardians of religion and morals, I owe the idea for this picture. Be graciously pleased to accept the dedication with my most humble respects."

But the exhibition nuisance also brought in its train other disastrous consequences for the future evolution of art. Heretofore the artist's activity had been more or less regulated by the orders he received. Rembrandt had been one of the first to paint pictures without any one's having ordered them. Now the painters begin to paint

for future consumption. Of course they paint what the public likes, for they want to sell all they can. When a painter in former times received a definite order, then he knew in advance for whom his painting was destined, and for what space, for what illumination. His invention must, even if it were to serve only as the ornamentation of a dwelling-place, subordinate itself in some fashion to an architectural limitation. The instinct for the style and bearing of his art, so long as this condition endured, could not so easily become enervated. Since the middle of the eighteenth century the painters hardly know any longer what is ultimately to become of the pictures they send to the exhibitions. They paint at random. As the taste of Louis XVI's Paris was still quite positive and bound by no æsthetic conventions, the mischief by no means reached such proportions in that day as it did later on in the bourgeois nineteenth century, when there was no longer any universally accepted standard of taste, but only a welter of fashionable styles. But even in the eighteenth century the solid ground was already honeycombed underfoot by the combined action of all these initially insignificant circumstances.

But whence came these disintegrating forces? Why did they not make themselves felt before? That the creative powers of painting had begun to slacken does indeed explain why art could offer no more decided resistance to these hostile influences, but gives us no enlightenment as to the origin of the influences themselves.

There can be no doubt that all the above-named forces are connected with that great revolutionary process in civilization which reached its conclusion in the French Revolution of 1789; the Revolution had been on

the way, of course, long before the Bastille was stormed. The writings of the eighteenth-century "enlighteners" in opposition to state and church are really nothing but attacks upon the existing spirit of art. The common feature of these phenomena is that not only those properly charged with this duty but also outsiders take a hand and shake the foundations of the existing order. The older art stood and fell with the aristocratic principle. Popes, monarchs, princes, and moneyed men had been its patrons, and substance and forms of painting had always remained bound up with conservative conventions. Nobody could have made it a reproach to a Raphael or a Dürer that he composed his picture thus or so; the forms were fixed by the laws of the style, which was not lightly to be meddled with. This conservative dominance of a universally valid mode of expression had always been for art the chief source of its strength. Also in the state of Louis XIV art had been strong only so long as it kept within the magic sphere of the acceptable style of the state.

In the eighteenth century, when first the critics and then the lay public meddled with the affairs of art, determining, promoting, criticising, these were the first stirrings of the spirit of revolution that was bent upon a reshaping of the existing order. The artist is suddenly forced to do what the majority demands of him. The two classes of art-patrons and art-producers are joined by a third and a fourth class, critics and public.

It is no wonder that the great Revolution threw overboard, among other things, this undermined and degenerate art when the Guillotine began to function, when the new government introduced the religion of common sense and the new calendar.

In the literal sense, a new art begins with the French Revolution, an art which deliberately abjured all the progress painting had made during the foregoing centuries, and went back instead to the beginnings of art. Rousseau's "let us return to Nature" was the slogan that sent painting spiralling back into the midst of the Primitives. Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) began once more from the beginning.

II

No one to my knowledge has sufficiently emphasized as yet the fact that with the nineteenth century there begins a totally new chapter in the history of art. The development which had gone steadily forward from 1400 to the end of the seventeenth century was violently broken off by the great Revolution.

The fifteenth century—and this furnishes the clearest proof that it was a primitive epoch—was more interested in objects than in the beauty of their forms. Hence all the paintings of the early Renaissance have something of a literary tinge. The painters narrate in leisurely and circumstantial fashion; they wish to have their pictures read as one would read a story, they want us to see ourselves in each separate figure and to stop and ponder over significant relationships between the actors. The public of the fifteenth century looked at these pictures as naively as children. They did not concern themselves with the "how" of their production. The sixteenth century thought less of contents than of formal beauty. Raphael's "School of Athens" is a wonderful graphic design, a perfectly balanced composition in lines; one goes away from this picture æsthetically delighted,

even if one had given no thought whatsoever to the meaning of its content. In the seventeenth century the content does indeed gain increased significance with the new realism. Rembrandt's Biblical tales wished to be accepted not only as creations of form, but at the same time as profoundly planned pictorial narratives. But his works do not abandon the æsthetic achievements of the foregoing epoch. They are, like those others, also purely æsthetic miracles. One need know nothing of the content underlying the "Night Watch" and will yet be carried away by the magic of its color-music.

An essential difference between the painting of the seventeenth century and that of the Renaissance lies in the form of presentation. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had comprehended visibility essentially in linear patterns. Even when they painted in colors, the outlines were fixed upon first of all, the boundaries. The clarity of the drawing of Michelangelo, for example, is altogether a linear clarity. His "Delphic Sibyl" (29) could be cut out with the shears by following her outline, so precisely is she viewed as pure silhouette. The style of the seventeenth century sees things by their retinal impressions, blurs the palpable plastic boundaries of the shape. Rembrandt's "Nicolaes Bruyningh" (69) cannot be cut out of the background; or if the attempt were made, the result would be a wholly senseless silhouette, bearing no relation to the bodily form depicted. Rembrandt and all the Baroque painters see reality not in lines but in more or less blurred patches.

That was progress, in the absolute sense. Seeing in lines is in a sense an indispensable prerequisite for seeing in spots. Only after we have thoroughly comprehended an object with respect to its tangible boundaries

can we advance to the study of its mere tonal values. Only when we realize at what points a figure detaches itself from its environment can we venture the next step, namely that of studying how binding shadows and form-blurring lights make it blend with its environment. The detachment of the form by the accentuated line of the silhouette has of course the further consequence that a picture has the effect of being composite; the tonal fusion produces the effect of indissoluble unity.

The painting of the eighteenth century had taken over the untrammelled, form-dissolving spot-composite style from the age of Rembrandt. It had moreover brightened the palette and given to the Baroque an elegant ease. Watteau (1684–1721) could create almost insubstantial composites out of dim and mysterious color-tones. Impossible to extract from his pastoral scenes the single figures line for line. (84.) His shepherds and shepherdesses no longer have any bodily substance, they are hazy creations of faint-shimmering silk and lace, a mere vibration of delicate color. They blend like a breath with the likewise quite incorporeal trees of the park, which are no trees at all. The very paint has become immaterial, impalpable; it moves within a scale of infinitely delicate broken tones. All the antithesis of the colors is reduced to a minimum. It is as if the surface had been powdered. So then this age was also wholly without interest in the subjects which it depicted. In the sham allegories painted for state commissions a question might indeed be asked as to the meaning of this or that figure, or of the whole composition. But otherwise the same subject recurred again and again, the pastoral scene, the love-scene in a park. Finally in the sixties, when Diderot, the father of the sentimental do-

mestic play, sharpened his critical pen, chastity and goodness were portrayed; the shepherds became country-folk. But nothing shows more drastically with how little seriousness this age took its subjects than a for-

84. ANTOINE WATTEAU
The Island of Cÿthera, 1717, Berlin, Royal Palace.

ward look from the country folk of Chardin (1698–1776) to the peasants that Jean-François Millet painted in the middle of the nineteenth century: flaming testimonials to the social problem, to the problem of the worker. Whatever the eighteenth century produced before the first rumblings of the Revolution, it was more or less decorative in the first place. The highest freedom of painting and the most refined technic, truly the ultimate fruit

of a painting cult that had been developing steadily for over three hundred years, but also a symptom of obsolescence and decadence is the fact that this art no longer has any taste for the things of reality. The eighteenth century toyed with the world.

David put an end to all the past. He reverted once more to the object, which grips and transports. He reintroduced the exact study of detail. He drew with lines as hard as steel. His delineative plastic form-ideal extinguishes the quivering light of Baroque painting, its dreamy twilight dimness and the sensory intoxication of color.

David was the spokesman of the Revolution in art, and he had that in his art that makes revolutions, namely oratory. Even before the outbreak of the Revolution he had been in Italy as holder of the *Prix de Rome*, and had brought back with him from there the picture that crashed into the middle-class sentimentality of the Diderot-Greuze atmosphere like the first thunderbolt of the Revolution: "The Oath of the Horatii." (85.) One must think of pictures such as Fragonard's "Bathing Women" in the Louvre—figures half-dissolved in a haze of iridescent colors—to be able to realize fully, in the light of the contrast, the sensation that this painting, wholly focussed upon the dramatically gripping moment and with a clarity of detail-drawing like that of a steel-engraving, produced in the Paris of 1785. The weeping women, the pathetic father, the sons arrayed one behind the other in a triple parallel, the triple parallel angle formed by their legs, the triple parallel horizontals of the arms upraised for the oath: "With the shield or upon it!" This is the eloquence that electrifies the mob. Here were set forth examples of old Roman heroism and self-

sacrifice for the Fatherland, in a lapidary style that every man understood. Away with the trumpery of the "Village Bride" and the "pastoral consolation of the widow"! The objectivity of the modelling, as firm as

85. J. L. DAVID
The Oath of the Horatii, 1784, Paris, Louvre.

marble, the primitive harshness of the coloring, the angular contours . . . for a painter like Fragonard or Greuze—to say nothing at all of Watteau—it must indeed have been intolerable barbarism.

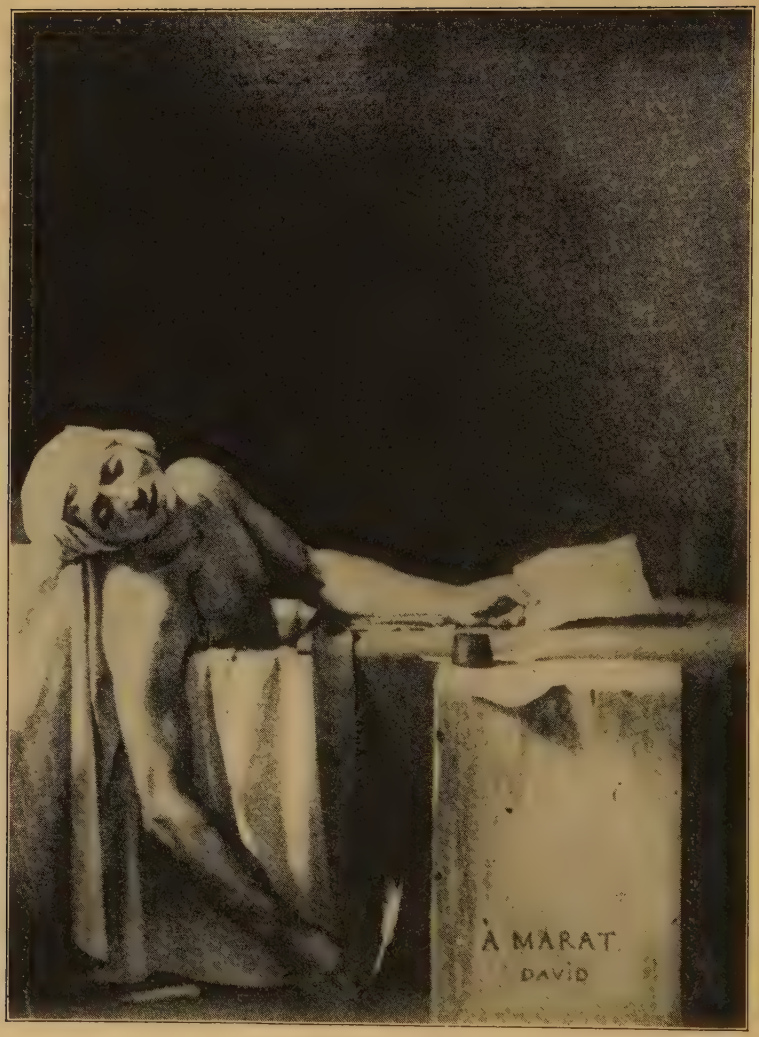
The "Horatii" were still akin to the eighteenth century in the fact that the subject and the treatment involved a return to classical antiquity. The full impetus of the Revolution's rhetoric is not revealed until the new age has really and truly begun, until David sits in the revolutionary tribunal.

On the 13th of July, 1793, Marat was murdered in his bathtub by Charlotte Corday. Carried away by the horror of the event, David painted it. He painted not the man Marat, but the facts of the case; he painted it as if he were recording the authentic findings of the coroner's jury.

David's style possessed this requirement: that of capturing not the pictorial illusion, but the tangible substance, the thing itself. An unexampled lapidarity of expression characterizes his picture: "Marat Murdered." (86.) The facts tell their story quite baldly: the arm hanging over the side of the tub and still holding the pen, the head turbaned in a bath-towel; everything imprisoned within the severe horizontals and verticals of the bathtub, and the rough wooden box that serves as a desk. And then only livid flesh, the dull wooden tone of the tub, a neutral wall. Otherwise nothing, absolutely nothing. Three words: "À Marat David."

The picturesque cult of Rococo, the form-dissolving magic of atmosphere, the technic of spot-composition, and the decorative sweetness . . . they were pulverized by this flinty speech, as was the old social order by the new. That is the style of the Revolution, the new primitiveness with which a new development begins.

But, even though France enjoyed this advantage over other lands, that all happenings in art transpired at the one central point, Paris, whereby of course every mutation of style gained for the moment a certain unquestioned validity—the will of the individual or of a group that joined forces with him could not limit art in the long run to a single style. To be sure it was all over, once and for all, with the style of the eighteenth cen-



86. J. L. DAVID
Marat Murdered, 1793, Paris, Louvre.

tury. The aristocratic principle was broken. If there were artists who were hostile at heart to the democratic principle, they must see how one could reconcile the stylistic demands of the young age, this harsh, primitive linear mode, with the possibilities of a sublime expression. Here lies the deeper meaning of the Romantic school and of Romanticism in general.

Romanticism has a retrospective eye. It seeks in the past a consolation for that which it lacks in the present. It indulges in history—for art a dangerous, at times disastrous occupation. Thus it came about that people reverted to the art of the past in order to seek the advice of the great aristocrats of the older painting as to how art was to be kept moving. In the age of linearism one could only take the great linear masters of the past as a starting-point. Thus Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) goes to school to Raphael. His "Vow of Louis XIII" (87) is an undisguised elaboration of two of Raphael's Madonnas, the Madonna of Foligno and the Sistine. Association with the great master of the *Cinquecento* leads Ingres away from the crudities of David. The more or less literary note and the detailed multiplicity of David's style—in a word, its primitiveness—is converted into classicism. Ingres asserted of himself, it is true, that he was a pure naturalist. In truth there is more æstheticism in his art than even in that of his great model. Ingres once more cultivates the large composition, the linear pattern. The literary subject interests him far less than it does David. And with the study of Raphael's later Roman phase there once more enters a broad and harmonious spirit into his coloring. The explosive asperities of David's coloring are overcome in the delicate color of Ingres. The road is open for the in-

troduction of the color-style that came after Raphael, the style of the Baroque.

And as a matter of fact, in Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) and Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863)—in so far as the stimulus of prototypes from the past comes into question at all—it is no longer Raphael, but Rubens and Rembrandt, *i. e.* Baroque art, that serve as model.

Jakob Burckhardt once said with truth that it was the destiny of nineteenth-century art to repeat once more the lessons of the past. In truth, what we have seen in these few examples confirms that statement. The primitiveness of David was replaced by the sixteenth-century reversion of Ingres, and this in its turn by the seventeenth-century Baroque of Delacroix. The difference is only this, that whereas in former times that same development—from the linear to the spotty composite, from manyness to oneness—was completed in the successive lapse of three centuries, the periods now replace each other in the briefest space of time. More than that, they overlap each other. When Rembrandt painted his broad, blurred pictures, the linearism of Raphael and Michelangelo was definitively extinguished. There were no linearists in the seventeenth century. But while Ingres is painting his Raphaelesque nudes, portraits, and altar-pieces, David on one side of him is still cultivating his primitivistic style, and on the other Géricault is already proclaiming the Baroque in his portraits, studies of horses, and equestrian scenes. This mutual overlapping of styles becomes quite confusing when we consider that the linearist Ingres was still at work when Manet inaugurated Impressionism, and that Géricault died one year before David.

Nevertheless, upon closer inspection the deep logical

87. INGRES

The Vow of Louis XIII, 1824, Montauban, Cathedral.

consistency of the development of nineteenth-century painting cannot be mistaken. Above all, let us not be disturbed by the divers wild anomalies of the lesser talents and schools. The damage done by the advice which learned professors of æsthetics, who knew nothing about painting, inflicted upon small and unsteady minds may have muddled the development at times; but it did not halt it. The Nazarenes and the Pre-Raphaelites and the rest, whatever their names may be, signify stagnation, but the mile-stones that the few very great men set up—David, Ingres, Géricault, Delacroix, the Barbizon school, the Impressionists—mark clearly and certainly the path of progress. Their style spans once more the advance from primitive to classic linearism, thence to the spotty style of the Baroque and Rococo, and ultimately attaches the new mode at the point to which, aside from Rembrandt, a few geniuses of the eighteenth century had carried the development of painting: at Impressionism, the style of painting which is really that of the nineteenth century.

The new element that came into painting through Géricault and Delacroix is by no means restricted to the fresh verve of their purely coloristic painting, which finally overcame the forced linearism of the David school. They also did away with the "great" subjects which had dominated in art since David. Géricault would have nothing to do with the claptrap of the Olympian gods and the heroes of antiquity. He dipped freshly into life wherever it presented itself to him as movement, and did not even shrink from the trivial. Who before his time would have thought of painting a horse-race? (88.) For Géricault the sportsman, who himself found death as racing horseman, there was noth-

ing more beautiful than the turbulent race-horses careering over the turf. He who looks ahead to the time of Impressionism, when the "What" of painting will no longer mean anything, but the "How" everything, will have a realization of the significance of Géricault's new

88. THÉODORE GÉRICAULT
Horse-Race at Epsom, 1825, Paris, Louvre.

point of view for the history of art-development. He began with the neutralization of subject-matter; painting was set free, as it were, of its literary ballast. Not as if the profound indifference to one's subject which characterized the eighteenth century had come back again. These young painters devote themselves to their subjects in all seriousness. Géricault has much to tell about the horse and the nature of racing; but what he has to impart pertains to painting and not to literature.

His eye speaks, not his poetic imagination. This young painter-generation explores reality with wholly new senses. They hold converse with visibility. At the same time so many new discoveries are made—as to the quality of light, as to the mutations of colors in the light, as

89. THÉODORE GÉRICAULT
The Raft of the Medusa, 1816, Paris, Louvre.

to the nature of motion—that there is more than enough to tell, even if no anecdotes are narrated.

Delacroix went in this respect much farther than his admired friend, since Géricault died very young. An example may explain this.

The great artistic experience of Delacroix's youth had been his first sight of Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa." (89.) Géricault had depicted an event of the year 1816, the reading about which had deeply affected him, much

as if he had been a part of it himself. What stirred Delacroix so deeply on seeing the picture was twofold: on the one hand the immediate truthfulness of it, the recreation of the life of these castaways, drifting about in the ocean for twelve long days on a frail and slender

90. EUGÈNE DELACROIX
The Barge of Don Juan, 1840, Paris, Louvre.

raft, and on the other hand the optical virtuosity of the young painter in drawing together this profusion of masterly nudes into the single swelling crescendo of one billowy contour, suggestive of the rising crest of a huge wave. That oblique upward rush was a convincing pictorial expression for the despairing cry for help that burst from every throat, that was an *optical* symbol, not a theatrical living picture into which one could read any one of a dozen meanings. And yet, when we see what Delacroix painted later on, we shall find as

we look back that a good deal of theatrical pathos, after all, still clung to Géricault's picture. Delacroix painted in 1840, that is about twenty years later, "The Barge of Don Juan." (90.) The reference is to that tremendous episode taken from the second canto of Byron's wonderful epic, where the shipwrecked mariners, after days of helpless drifting, when their provisions have all been consumed and they are on the verge of starvation, draw lots to see which of them shall be slaughtered so that the others might have something to eat. Remember, in this case the inspiration did not derive from a shallow newspaper report, as in Géricault's picture; Delacroix was stimulated by the overpowering effect of a passage of poetry; what he undertakes is really an illustration of Byron's graphically shaped episode. Hence one might really expect something still more spectacular than the "Raft of the Medusa." In reality, it is just the reverse. Quite untheatrical is the depiction of the matter. The players scarcely act. With difficulty can we make out what is going on in the boat. Delacroix's conception is so absolutely optically determined, proceeds so directly toward the pictorial reality, that he finds the courage to give only that which one might probably have seen, had one been an eye-witness of the horrifying incident:

> " . . . thus, shivering like the tertian
> Ague in its cold fit, they fill'd their boat,
> With nothing but the sky for a great coat."
> (Canto II, LXIII.)

All theatricality has been avoided, and yet Delacroix's work is a bit of pictorial poetry as well as Byron's is poetic painting. The horrible, torturing, *muffled* tone to which Byron has brought down his episode has been preserved:

"At length one *whispered* his companion, who
Whispered another, and thus it went round . . .
Then lots were made, and marked and mixed, and handed
In *silent* horror . . ." (*Ibid.*, LXXIII.)

There was, however, one more achievement of fundamental importance to be consummated, beyond what Delacroix had achieved, before the repetition of what had once been done had fully run its course, and the way was finally clear for a wholly original type of painting.

Despite the fact that Delacroix, more than any other, had resolutely steered the bark of painting into the channel of an absolutely pictorial style, he was still dragging along a heavy, dead mass of ballast bequeathed by the Renaissance, which burdened unduly the ship of the new art, freighted as it was more deeply from day to day with new observations of reality and values in painting; it would travel its course faster, if only that ballast were once thrown overboard. By this ballast I mean: composition according to rule, the conventional formulas of disposition which, devised long and long before, had been preserved on into the nineteenth century.

We are prone to forget that even where we think we see wholly untrammelled invention before us in older pictures, the first stimulating experience of the painter is often by no means freshly and directly preserved in the picture, but has been squeezed into a conventional design, into the compositional formula. This is the case, for example, in Delacroix's "Liberty on the Barricades" (91), the original idea for which came to the painter when he saw, during the revolution of 1830, a half-stripped girl snatch the banner from the hand of a fallen man and with it lead the surviving champions of liberty over the barricade. The composition *per se*—the irre-

sistible diagonal of light in which the picture culminates above the heavy horizontals of the corpses on the ground, and its accompaniment by certain diagonals on both sides—evidently derives from a composition-formula of Rubens's, as in his lion-hunt in the Munich Pina-

91. EUGÈNE DELACROIX
Liberty on the Barricades, 1830, Paris, Louvre.

kothek. So it is on all hands. Wherever one takes under the microscope a painting by the French, as late as the thirties of the nineteenth century, one finds that the formula employed is in most cases taken from something or other in Renaissance or Baroque. Not always with the openness of Ingres. Géricault and Delacroix attempt at least to shape the formulas with progressive naturalness and more in accordance with naturalistic problems.

But little by little, observations which proceeded not from a preconceived design, but only from the immediate study of Nature, permeated the field of picture-composition. The landscapists of the Barbizon school, above all—Camille Corot (1796–1875), Narcisse Diaz (1807–76), Jules Dupré (1812–89), Théodore Rousseau (1812–67), Charles Daubigny (1817–78), and others—contributed an inestimable amount to the neutralization of the conventional formulas for composition; also, by the way, to the neutralization of the literary formula, which was of course more natural for them in view of their special subject, the intimate landscape, than for painters of anecdote or *genre*.

But even these *paysagistes intimes*, when they began, had followed compositional models. The observation of color and the sensitivity to that which can be expressed by paint in accordance with a certain mood is indeed much richer in Jules Dupré than in his admired model, the Dutchman Jakob van Ruysdael; but in spite of that, the Ruysdael formula is everywhere unmistakably evident, even through the veil of the new atmospheric mood and the new illumination. Rousseau freed himself more fully from the Baroque pathos of Ruysdael. He is less of an enthusiast than Dupré, rather an unromantic man of fact. One might almost call him a landscape-architect, so decidedly does he aim at the clarity of spatial relationships. In the way he has of cementing the simple cylinders of his trees with the horizontals of the ground there is even a first beginning of that which Corot and Millet brought to completion, namely, the unimitating invention of a compositional scheme, directly from the landscape sector, which can replace the traditional rules.

Corot did much in this direction. Strange to say, he was not even the most sensitive observer of Nature among the masters of the Barbizon school. "When I am outdoors, I feel like a little schoolboy before the great schoolmistress, Nature, but when I have closed the studio-door behind me, then I am the good God who can create his works without hindrance." That was Corot's position toward Nature and art. It seems, however, as if his fear of the great mistress had not made him blind to her wonders. He possessed only that enviably great vision that penetrates beyond all details to the total conception, probably without ever being conscious of it. From his sketches it is clear that he receives his first fresh impression of Nature as a finished pattern of great simplicity. He starts out with utterly simple dispositions of light and shade, and only in the further course of his work do the solid individual forms grow out of these general lightnesses and darknesses in his pictorial imagination.

"The Steep Road" (92) illustrates how Corot attained by this method to pictorial forms of great simplicity and impressiveness, yet without doing any violence to Nature—which he describes in the full sunlight —by forcing her into some borrowed compositional formula. All the detailed forms find a firm support in the main intersecting diagonals—the road and the horizon-line of the mountain-slope. The road as the central motif is emphasized once more, with equal firmness and simplicity, by the two vertical trees that frame it in. In another case, "The Castle of Beaune la Rolande," the view of a moat before an old castle-wall is divided into simple color-squares and triangles of light.

But the painter who with full deliberation threw

overboard the entire business of the old style of composition according to rule, and put in place of a "composition" simply the primary sector from Nature, derived from no source, but freshly experienced in the face

92. CAMILLE COROT
The Steep Road, Paris, Louvre.

of Nature, was Jean François Millet (1814–75). And with that the way was then clear for a new departure in painting, for all that had been transmitted as inheritance from the days of old had been absorbed.

Millet, the Norman peasant-lad, always had the profoundest abhorrence of the conventionalisms of "formal beauty." He brought with him into art two enormous advantages, an inner poetry undemoralized by any schooling, and a great and simple eye. He saw for the

first time in the activities of the farm the unity of man, earth, and sky. The destiny of the human race seemed to him to lie in its attachment to the earth. His simple visions of Nature, experienced from within his soul, he painted just as he had seen them, without asking what the gentlemen who taught the theory of composition might say to them. Positively startling are those elemental visions, especially when the silhouettes of his people blend at the twilight hour with the heavens and the earth. If anywhere, then it is in him that we see how great feeling and great seeing go creatively hand in hand. The teacher of his form was to be sure not Nature alone. His favorite poet was Virgil. Not the mythology in him, which had so often served the Rococo painters as subjects for their works, nor indeed any of the "What" in him did he allow to flow from Virgil into his feeling for art, but the "How"; the conciseness of Latin inscriptions characterizes his form. He also had plaster casts of the Parthenon frieze in his studio, that is, Greek art. He is the first, it seems, who thoroughly understood the art of Greece and Rome, for he did not imitate it, like all before him. But the spirit of ancient art lives on, without any doubt, more purely and creatively in the primitive grandeur of his formal instinct than in the works of Poussin, David, or Ingres.

The "Gleaners" (93) affect the present-day beholder especially through the impetus of their compositional formula. But this formula is derived from no work of the past, it is but the intensification of the original creative impression which Millet received when he watched the gleaners at their work. What one is to feel first of all is the bending of the backs. This gesture gives the picture its life. This bending is repeated twice,

quite uniformly; that makes it insistent. It is not arrived at suddenly, it is prepared for by the first gleaner, who is still half upright. But all three—that is our next reaction—are fastened to the soil; that is effected by the downward impetus of the extended horizon-line and

93. JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET
The Gleaners, 1856, Paris, Louvre.

the broad shape of the entire picture. The horizon could not be lowered a single inch. There is a preparatory drawing on an up-ended oblong sheet which proves the indubitable superiority of the final picture.

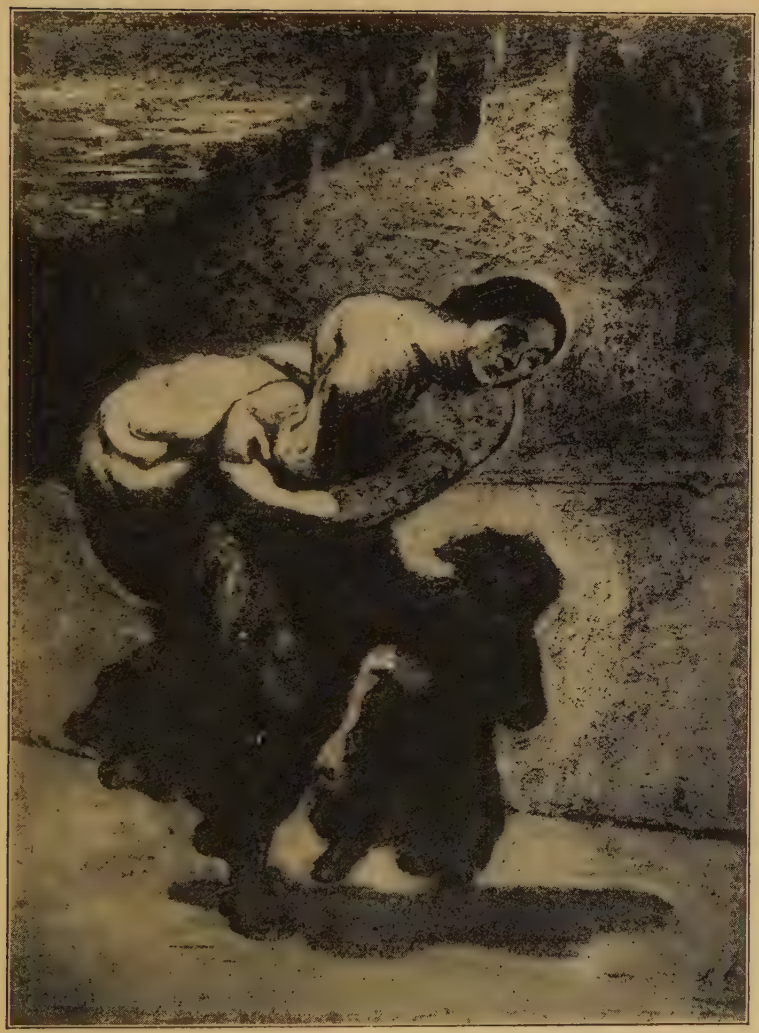
The pictures of Millet—they were ultimately painted from memory—are naturally the result of a hundredfold sifting through the memory. With ever-increasing concentration he appears to have pondered over the simplest basic idea. But never did he depart from the freshness of

the first sketch, of the first impression of Nature that determined the composition at its inception.

Thus it comes about that in such a work as the "Angelus" (94) form and content seem to be absorbed by each other without residue. From the impression of

94. JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET
Angelus, Paris, Louvre.

Nature—two people offering their evening prayer on the broad field—something unalterable has come forth, something absolutely inevitable. Nothing can be taken away, nothing added, without piercing its life to the heart. And at the same time it stamps itself unforgetably on the memory, so simple is it. The two people intersect the horizon as two verticals. She bows her head in prayer. This gesture speaks with an incomparable emphasis, because this deviation from the vertical



95. HONORÉ DAUMIER
The Washwoman.

and this absolute rectangularity can find no competition at any other point in the picture.

It is no wonder that these two pictures are among those few really popular works that even the twentieth century has taken over from the nineteenth.

The great, simple seeing of Millet finds a counterpart in Honoré Daumier (1808–79). Daumier took as his starting-point the caricature, always the legitimate field for anecdotal and literary pictorial narrative. But so powerful, even in the forties and fifties, is the aversion to all that cannot be said by the speech of form alone that Daumier can dispense altogether with those literary and didactic media that are only rationally derivative from the picture. As Millet stands face to face with the peasant character and the landscape, unbiassed by any compositional formulas whatever, and at once extracts visually the eloquent pattern from the great coherence of the whole, so does Daumier face the citizens of the great city and their bourgeois weaknesses. He always sees, whether his mood be serious or gay, only the essentials of things, only that which kindles. The "Washwoman" (95) who hurries onward painfully, with her basket on her arm—is there really any need here of the few recognizable details? Should we not know all about her being driven along, and about the horribly heavy, impeding burden, and about the whole misery of it, even if we had nothing else than merely the pattern of the picture? For in the silhouette lies the whole expression, not in the face nor in anything else that we could interpret in a purely rational way. The one fearful dent in the silhouette, where the basket cuts into it, speaks with unforgetable force.

The literary quality of art was overcome, the domi-

nation of conventional composition was broken, an untrammelled colorism had been evolved, Nature was once more the sole subject for painting.—The way was clear for Impressionism.

CHAPTER VI

THE CLIMAX

I

To grasp clearly the historical genesis of an age with respect to its causes and effects always demands a certain distance on the part of the student. The farther we can withdraw from it, the more clearly can we distinguish the essential determining features of its development from the subordinate ones. As to the genesis of the Renaissance, most thinkers are in fair agreement. The picture of that time is so remote from us that its principal lines stand forth clearly. The age of Baroque, as we are considerably closer to it, we find rather complicated. It is not so easy to embrace the totality of it with one glance. But the nineteenth century is so close to us that the abundance of the currents which cross and blend in it is utterly perplexing. I have endeavored to assume a distant point of view, and in the effort to set forth with the greatest possible clarity at least that which seems to me to demonstrate a steady advance in its art development, I have ventured to eliminate everything that in my opinion was only side-channel or counter-current. I am fully conscious that the picture I have sketched is subjectively viewed.

Now the fact is, however, that the art-growth of the nineteenth century, like all other spiritual trends in it, is far more complex than even that of the Baroque. I have already spoken of the manifold mutual overlappings of its principal schools. But as a further confusing factor we have the circumstance that since the beginning

of the nineteenth century something has ceased to exist in art which alone had made the character of art from 1400 to 1750 so clear and unambiguous, namely a style that was universally binding within a given age. Since about 1820 there is no longer in painting a mode of seeing and presenting which is recognized by every artist as a self-understood norm, nor by every art-lover in the same way. That visibility was represented in linear values was just as obvious and natural to the age of Raphael as it was obvious and natural to the age of Rembrandt that visibility was apprehended in spots. There is no spotty style in the sixteenth and no linear style in the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century, on the other hand, everybody draws and paints according to his own whim. There is nothing left but fashions and dialects. At the exhibitions around 1840 there prevailed a Babylonian confusion in the matter of expressive styles. We must realize clearly that the mutations from the linearism of David to the spotty style of Delacroix, which I undertook to single out from the general chaos as a development-factor, were in fact born of the will of individual personalities, and by no means of the single-minded will of all. The mode of expression and vision which these school-founders had evolved does probably form a basis for the creative work of others, but—quite unlike the past epochs in art—the "speech" which they had devised at any given time did not possess the universal validity of law. Even the enormous advantage that the organic development of French art possessed in the fact that all happenings in art were confined to the one central place, Paris, could not prevent many men from standing apart and cultivating a style of their own choice. Conservatives, who sought salvation

retrospectively in a renewal of the past and hence chose their models from the most heterogeneous stylistic periods from Giotto to Watteau, stood—with equal justification in the eyes of the critics—side by side with those who cast their eyes forward in search of an original style of representation in harmony with the spirit of the new age. But now if I were to turn from France and speak of England and Germany, where every town and every village upheld its own school and its own particularistic art-interests, then the collective picture of nineteenth-century art would be still more confused, and the essential lines of development, which in my opinion really do exist, would be completely blurred.

Many things combined to bring about this condition.

In the first place the circumstance, which I have already mentioned, that the development which had proceeded organically from 1400 to 1750 was violently interrupted by the French Revolution. The consequence was that the main stream, dammed up by crude violence, soon broke loose again and asserted its own right to exist alongside the newly created one. To a far greater degree than in any past epoch in art, we find in nineteenth-century art the old continuing to claim equal rights with the new and wholly heterogeneous. But it was inevitable that the two streams would soon mingle their waters. The new trend was influenced by the old, and the old by the new. But it must further be borne in mind that the nineteenth century is an epoch in which a fundamentally new civilization was trying to take shape. The cultural genesis of such epochs always has a somewhat catastrophic character. The mighty accumulation of the Renaissance inheritance disintegrates but slowly. It fills the entire space, as it were, and robs the young

shoots, that are trying to rise to the light, of the requisite ground. Streams of force, endeavoring to spring into life, are compelled to burst asunder the massive strata that are deposited above them. Thus the nineteenth-century atmosphere is constantly detonating with explosions, and yet its space is subsequently filled to bursting with the débris of these forcibly executed blasting operations. In art and philosophy conditions are like those in politics.

The magnificent completeness of the age of Louis XIV, whose symbol was the state, transmuted itself in the civilization of the nineteenth century into its opposite, into an unexampled decomposition. Symptoms of the coming destruction had set in as early as 1760, and we have seen how at the same time art also began to forfeit its rigid stylistic organization.

In the field of science the disintegration is revealed with especial clearness. Here the cause is found in the fact that the individual is no longer in a position to survey the monstrously expanded river-valley of knowledge and its multitudinous fine ramifications. In the general throng, each one steers his own course and has no idea whither the journey tends. In the adjoining fields of poetry, each one cultivates his own little plot of ground and has neither desire nor time to cast so much as a glance at his neighbor's land. Where there had once been a dominating synthesis, to which civilization owed its inner assurance and calm, what now prevailed was an unlimitedly analytical temper. As the "universalist" had been the type of the seventeenth and eighteenth century man, so the specialist, or more properly the *solipsist*, became the nineteenth-century type. Such a universal spirit as Goethe, who mastered without effort all the

fields of knowledge of his time and united their results in a wholly unified philosophy, would have been simply inconceivable in the nineteenth century.

The age of seventeenth-century civilization, too, had been of course full of contradictions. But its unshaken, substantial culture gave it the force to harmonize them; its philosophy was rendered all the more unified thereby. The nineteenth century, with the essential assistance of the natural sciences and of experimental psychology, ground into splinters, as it were, what the "enlighteners" of the eighteenth century had still allowed to stand of the unified old picture of the world. The last complete philosophical system was set up by Hegel. But by the middle of the nineteenth century no thinker has great universalistic systems and connections in view any more; all things are contemplated in complete detachment.

At the same time there come in quite automatically —since the individual is uprooted, no longer feels himself as part of a Cosmos—that I-dom which refers the world and all its parts only to one's own person, to one's own senses. Present-day philosophical terminology calls that solipsism; we might also speak, with Immanuel Kant, of moral and æsthetic Egoism. We understand by that so exclusive a concentration of a man upon himself, and above all upon his personal sensations, that his thinking ceases to recognize any world that does not exist for him personally, indeed through him personally. Goethe detected this trait, so eminently characteristic of the mentality of the nineteenth century, in Lord Byron, as whose direct embodiment he introduces the figure of "Euphorion" in the second part of *Faust*, putting in his mouth the words:

"The world was not, till *I* created it.
The sun *I* guided upward from the sea,
With *me* began the moon her changeful course . . ."

The dramas of Henrik Ibsen, and to a still greater degree those of August Strindberg, are examples of solipsism in modern poetry. In philosophy we have its purest expression in the so-called "empirio-criticistic" school of Ernst Mach, the author of the *Analysis of the Sensations*, and in the philosophy of Richard Avenarius. This doctrine culminates in the statement: There is no world *per se*, but only a world *for us*. Its elements are not atoms or other absolute substances, but only sensations of color, tone, pressure, space, and time. It is very noteworthy that these doctrines were formulated at exactly the same time as the impressionistic style in painting arose.

But if the composite spiritual picture of the nineteenth century presents itself as a picture of confusion and disintegration, then we may scarcely expect that the art-style which mirrors its cultural and spiritual character would be founded upon its opposite: upon orderliness and clarity. Confusion is a legitimate part, and indeed a very essential part, of the style of the nineteenth century.

Any one who may desire hereafter to analyze the typical style of the last century on the basis (say) of its city architecture will have to emphasize planlessness as its most striking stylistic trait. How unified and complete, after all, was the city-plan of the eighteenth century! Whole cities were laid out in accordance with a unified plan, of which the design for the city of Washington, devised by a Frenchman, gives us a splendid example at the present time. In the cities thus laid out in the

eighteenth century there was not one edifice which did not stand in a harmonious relation to its neighbors, with which it was attuned in its architectural proportions and in every last ornament. If we pass from such a beautiful city into one of the late nineteenth century, it is as if that glorious unity had suddenly been mangled by a hurricane. A wild confusion of all sorts of styles is prevalent. Not one building pays any attention to its neighbor. Streets and squares seem to owe their existence to accident and no more, as formerly, to an organic plan which follows the laws of artistic climax. What is altogether lacking is the compulsion of a universally valid standard of taste. Everybody does exactly as he pleases, no one thinks of the total effect.

Also in the perplexing back-and-forth of the realistic and idealistic, linear and spotty styles in painting, confusion and incoherence are reflected as a factor in stylistic development.

But why does this mad disorder come to an end at the moment when Impressionism begins to achieve recognition? Why is Impressionism accepted uniformly and even internationally as a genuine style, even though earlier in some lands, later in others?

Speaking psychologically, it would have been impossible for Impressionism to be adopted so unanimously and internationally, had not that mode of viewing and presenting things which is peculiar to it corresponded to the spiritual structure of the age better than all that had preceded it.

So it was. Impressionism became the accepted style because it took the mentality of the late nineteenth century as the sole basis of its seeing and made its own all the longings that were more or less latent in its day. It

was the first time in many decades that a mode of expression in art could feel in harmony with the spirit of the times and not in opposition to it. That the solid citizens declared the art-mode of Manet and Monet to be a filthy mess has not the least thing to do with that which I have just said. They did not possess the power of judgment which was requisite to appreciate the significance of that style; they naturally saw only that what the men around Monet were painting was different from that which they had hitherto found "so sweet and lovely." True leaders in the realm of the spirit are always a generation ahead of their time. Middle-class acceptance of Impressionism only came when it was already on the point of going over into Expressionism, which of course, by the way, fared no better in the eyes of the esteemed public than its predecessor.

The question which it is our first duty to answer is this: Why was none of the styles of preceding masters or schools of the nineteenth century accepted by its age as the convincing formal expression of the age, as *the* style?

What we have thus far seen was this: individual artists—each of course in his own particular manner—strove for new syntheses, for a self-sufficient style of visualization. What guided these efforts was the firm conviction that the art of the present, at least in its internal and external structure, must resemble that of the past. In truth, however, the essence of the new day was so fundamentally different from that of the past, that even the art-forms of the past were no longer suited to the present. For example, the new mentality strove for the analytic dissection of reality; but painting strove for synthesis. In some essential points, therefore, even

Delacroix and Millet were in direct opposition to their age. The style is sought for in every possible way. The one clings to greatness of subject, the other to greatness of form. But now while the successive schools are mutually warring with each other, step by step all that is eliminated which had been left in the language of art as a survival of a bygone, no longer valid cultural epoch. First the merely literary and theatrical element, which was basically repellent to the objective, matter-of-fact humanity of the new age, was done away with. Then composition by formula disappeared, whose tendency to create in the picture a finality, something self-sufficient, was no less antagonistic to the mentality of the nineteenth century, for which there was neither finality nor objectivity. Despite all this, even Daumier was not yet in harmony with the feeling of his time, for the simple reason that he was still forever trying to set before his fellow men something final and self-sufficient in his works. Although Daumier was truly a typical solipsist, who could and would see the world in no fashion but his own, he tried, as well as did Millet or Delacroix, to convert the contemporary world to the idea that his artistic mode was the only legitimate one. Daumier was, to be sure, not so drastic as Gustave Courbet, who proclaimed to every one, whether they wished to hear it or not: "There is only *one* art: that of Gustave Courbet."

That is the situation with respect to the artists. Now, what was the attitude of the public to all this? For a harmony is only thinkable when both parties, at least in so far as both are represented by their choicest members, agree in their wants and the satisfaction of them.

Well, the people of the nineteenth century were un-

commonly sensitive. They had an overrefined nervous system, ever clamoring for new and stronger stimuli. The great calm and self-sufficiency of the art of a Millet could not satisfy this somewhat hysterical, sensation-greedy nervous system. Millet's essence is uncomplex simplicity. Millet's color is actually supremely lacking in stimulus. Delacroix's color, on the other hand, was "nervous" and flexible like that of no other, it titillated and lashed the nerves. But then, the compositional formulas he borrowed from Rubens and Tintoretto often force the inner mobility of his painting into petrifaction. Also his romantic trend runs counter to the scientifically cool and exact spirit of the late nineteenth century. It is not without reason that he has been called "the last old master."

But Impressionism assumes all the elements in the mentality of its contemporaries as an ideal. Their solipsism, their analytic tendencies, their nervousness and sensitivity.

Repose? For Impressionism there is no repose in Nature. Everything in Nature is in flux, everything is different at each moment, indeed this constant being-in-motion is precisely the essential thing about life. The fixation of a phenomenon at rest, if one wishes to apprehend life, has as little sense as the pressing of a flower in the herbarium to the same end.

Objective reproduction of reality? For Impressionism there is no world and no object *per se*. As for the philosophy of Ernst Mach, so also for Manet, Monet, and Degas there is only a world of our senses, that is, a world that consists of stimuli on the retina. As "*I*" *see* the world, so *is* the world. Impressionism is justly convinced that the visual capacities of all men are in general

the same. So long as the older painters, however, transmuted reality in accordance with all sorts of ideals and preconceived concepts, so long as they did not go back to the pure experience of the retinal picture, their presentation was subjectively colored. They were too impatient, that is, to let the eyes and senses of others accept their pictures as valid views of reality. But when the artist relies with absolute confidence upon nothing but his retinal images, and leaves out everything that he *knows* about things, he will succeed in creating in his paintings truly and objectively valid copies of the world.

According to the theory of the Impressionists, the brush may hold fast only that which the ocular apparatus, with a relatively quiet adjustment of the visual axis, perceives in the realm of its field of vision, and that too at a relatively rapid glance. Also it is important that everything—whether far or near—should lie in one visual plane. The Impressionistic painter therefore always studies his models in Nature at a certain distance, whereas the older school of painting, with the exception of a few foreseers of Impressionism, gave in the same picture forms seen close by and at a distance.

This optical principle signified at the same time a complete revolution in the previously accepted theory of colors.

The older painting, despite all naturalistic intentions, had possessed in color primarily a decorative agency. Whoever knows the pink flesh-tones of the Renaissance, or whoever knows the brown trees in the landscapes of Ruysdael, he knows that between the colors of Nature and the colors in painting there had hitherto existed a relation which cannot be compared with the severe demands of Impressionism, aiming as it did at absolute

optical accuracy of coloring. The painting of Titian, indeed even that of Velazquez and Rembrandt, saw in the sonorous blending of a few dominant tones merely a means to the attainment of balance and harmony. Only on this basis could Rembrandt orchestrate landscapes like compositions of color-music; in this conception of color lies the sole justification for Rembrandt's utterly unrealistic painting in *chiaroscuro*.

Impressionistic painters go out into Nature and seek to capture with full accuracy of color the objects they see, along with the enveloping air and sunlight. Thus they renounce from the outset those old advantages of the color-harmony that still completely dominates the art of Delacroix, for instance. In its stead they introduce a "naturalistic color-harmony," which is based upon the absolute exactitude of tonal values.

The old school was so preoccupied with the doctrine of color-harmony that none of the older painters seems ever to have hit upon the idea of imitating exactly the color-values of Nature. For example, Leonardo da Vinci, who, as was mentioned above, set down theoretical observations on this point in his treatise on painting which anticipate the practical discoveries of Impressionism, but never attempted their application. And yet this is an observation that every one of the older painters must have made: in outdoor Nature there *are* no disharmonies of color. The most glaring contrasts blend there, through the mysterious power of the all-combining atmosphere. Delacroix had observed that shadows in complementary colors are important for the harmonious blending of conflicting tones. Impressionism went much farther. It saw that there are no absolute colors whatever in Nature, but only relative color-values, that is,

that every color influences its neighbor. The "naturalistic color-harmony" will therefore be automatically preserved by the painter in his picture, if he pays heed, not as heretofore to the several local colors, but to the relationship of the several "values" to each other. The absolute fidelity to values in the new painting permitted the revelation of a wholly new phase of reality —the co-representation of atmosphere and colored light. It was no longer necessary, in order to achieve a bright light, to burden the picture with a dark background. Painting in the studio, indeed, ceased altogether for a while. Everybody went out into the open, in order to conquer the still undiscovered realm of the *plein air*.

One limitation in its possibilities is indeed inherent in this open-air painting, one which it has never been able to overcome entirely. Material *paint* cannot compete with sunlight in its highest values. Under a cloudy sky, the paint on the palette may perhaps approximate the lights in Nature, but so soon as the sun comes out, even the brightest white of the painter will appear like a heavy darkness beside the self-radiant sunlight. But in the direction of the darker values the palette can very well compete with Nature: the blackness of night is identical with the black in the paint-tube. It follows from this that in the scale of tones there is an inequality which must be adjusted if the naturalistic harmony is to be correct. The tonal intervals on the palette must be differently tuned, as it were, so that the several tonal vibrations will not result in a false concord.

This is in brief the theory of Impressionism, as far as the representation of Nature comes in question. It is a perfect example of the analytic spirit of the century.

II

The school of the Impressionists, or as they called themselves, the *école de Batignolles*, was founded by Édouard Manet (1833–83). The first decisive works in the new style date back as far as the sixties, yet in them the principle of "open-air painting" and of color-brightness has not yet found expression. The instigator of this "*pleinairisme*" was Claude Monet (1840–1926), Manet's loyal friend. Alfred Sisley (1839–99), and Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), deserve mention as satellites of the new solar system. Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), is indeed also to be enumerated in the *école de Batignolles*, but he remained all his life more of a painter in the older sense, who never could or would entirely shake off the school of Courbet and the painting of the old masters. A wholly individual position is occupied by Edgar Degas (1834–1917). He blended the delicate feeling for linear values, which he brought with him from the school of Ingres, on the one hand with the discoveries of open-air painting and on the other hand with the supremely clever decorative style of the art of the Far East, and that in a manner that was to be very significant for the future of modern painting.

The real stimulation to impressionistic seeing came from the older Spanish school. When Manet came under the influence of Velazquez for the first time, there was consummated at last—across the gulf of two hundred years of stagnant development—a junction with the Baroque which, as we know, had prepared the way for Impressionism. It was the two great Pre-Impressionists, Velazquez (1599–1660), and Francisco Goya (1746–1828), who revealed to Manet the realm of the new art. In

Velazquez, and to a still greater degree in Goya, Manet found the consistent optical naturalism of whose possibility he had indeed dreamed, but whose realization, before he set out on his journey to Spain, had so far eluded his grasp. The Spaniards showed him for the first

96. FRANCISCO GOYA
Shooting of the Rebels of May 3, 1808, Madrid.

time the application of a style of painting in broad, wholly unmodelled patches. From them Manet learned that the optical effect secured in this manner corresponded to the last detail with the physiological apperceptive process of the retina. From this merely suggestive technic of the two Spanish masters he learned further how an intentionally unfinished style of painting can stimulate the imagination of the beholder; how

for example a couple of suggestive even though apparently formless brush-strokes in place of an exhaustively depicted hand can impart more information about the character of that hand than if everything were set forth completely at the outset and nothing were left for

97. ÉDOUARD MANET
Shooting of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico.

the imagination to do. In other words: he learned to know the significance of the principle that was later on to become so fundamentally important for the entire structure of impressionistic painting, the principle of omission.

The "Shooting of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico"[1]

[1] Of this subject there exist several markedly divergent paintings. The author has seen, apart from some sketches published in facsimile, only the picture in the Kunsthalle at Mannheim (97), and the one which hangs as a loan-donation in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Mass.

is the most visible proof of the Spanish influence upon Manet. A comparison with Goya's "Shooting of the Rebels of May 3, 1808" (96), of which Manet's picture is a reminiscence, is well adapted to introduce us to the art of the first Impressionist. Manet did not copy the Spaniard's picture, he criticised it in accordance with his own views of the meaning and purpose of painting. Goya's work, despite its startling verity and its instantaneousness, was nevertheless at bottom a genuine "anecdotal picture" of the old style. The "hero," who with fanatically outstretched arms is urging the soldiers to shoot him, is the centre of interest. In spite of many interesting single portrayals surrounding him—men who are just dropping with bullets through the breast, rebels already swimming in their own blood—yet the art of a great *régisseur* has been watchful to see that the attention of the beholder is never diverted from the acting of the hero. Manet (97) renounces from the outset every trace of theatrical stage-management, all embellishing detail, all gestures, all rational, effect-seeking disposition. His first question is: what would I have perceived if I had happened to be an eye-witness of the occurrence? He is wholly unsentimental. It is not the hero that we see first—indeed he disappears altogether in the powder-smoke—but the wall of soldiers with pointed guns; and even of those we see not the faces or anything that we might think of first: but logically quite subordinate matters: white head-dresses, gaiters, belts are optically of the most importance. Goya has told the story like a novelist of the old school, arranging the figures in a purely logical sequence: first the hero, then the details, and lastly the salvo. Manet stands the classical rules of the "anecdotal picture" on their heads.

He shows that the world of seeing follows logical rules of its own, quite different from those of reflection and of literary narration; that when we observe, we assign importance to some things which reflection places at the

98. ÉDOUARD MANET
La Rue de Berne, Paris.

very end. That Impressionism, on its part, reacted significantly upon literature through this new rhythm of seeing, is well known.

The "Shooting of Maximilian" was the only anecdotal picture Manet ever painted. And indeed such subjects were no proper field for a style of painting that subordinated the "What" altogether to the "How," the object to its optical impression. A witticism was current

at that time: "To the Impressionists a well-painted cabbage-head is more significant than a Madonna."

Since painting was for the first time wholly dependent on ocular observation, and since in reality there was a world of phenomena that had to be rediscovered, of course beauty must now be discoverable in every sort of object. Who had ever painted a street as it actually looked on a hot day, when everything was only a mass of gray dust in the blazing sun, with a couple of fluttering tricolors contrasting so strangely with the quixotic silhouette of a veteran hobbling along on his crutches? Thus Manet painted the "Rue de Berne." (98.) How many rationalizing associations, how much architectural and *genre*-like detail had the painters of "views" and the lithographers always put into their street-scenes! Here there was nothing of all that. A new optical vision had discovered that a few spots were all that one would see, under given circumstances, and that it was precisely in the pattern of these spots that the secret of the street, its meaning and its symbolism, could be most tellingly expressed.

Of course the greatest possibilities for Impressionism lay in the field of landscape-painting.

It is true that the Barbizon school had already made a great advance in their pictures toward the capture of the pure phenomenality of the landscape. Daubigny had even gone directly out into the open with palette and easel and had painted, in his fashion, open-air studies. But something basically inharmonious had always been the result, because he had not yet recognized that medium through which alone all the true tones of reality blend into one harmony: the atmosphere.

It is this atmosphere that one feels in the landscapes

99. CLAUDE MONET

A Summer Day.

of Claude Monet—feels it in such a way as to create the illusion that every color-tone would change so soon as one stepped closer to the picture.

It is instructive to confront one of the heavy green landscapes of Courbet with the similar subject by Pissarro. Where in Courbet's picture each individual color is reproduced accurately as a local tone, in Pissarro's work not a single local color can be found any more. The blending atmosphere is visualized too, and it transmutes all local tones into values. The relativity of all visible things was wholly unknown to Courbet. Now too the element of depth, the space, is expressed by color and only by color. In Monet's landscape (99), shadows have ceased to be darknesses. All heaviness has vanished from painting. One constantly has the illusion of a floating of the depicted things in the atmosphere. Wherewith is also connected that strange suggestion which comes to us again and again in the study of impressionistic works, the suggestion that if we were but to look away for one moment, in the next instant everything would look quite different.

It was upon this effect that Impressionism based its peculiar solution of the problem of motion.

Impressionism does not shrink from motion in its most abandoned forms. When one sees Manet's "Race at Longchamps" (100), one asks himself in astonishment if it was really only forty years since Géricault had painted a horse-race for the first time. (88.) What seemed at that time, as a foil to David and Ingres, so bold, so modern, so impressionistic, now strikes us as at best a faint foreboding of coming possibilities. Manet has the daring to make his horses, seen from in front, not from the side, come dashing straight down upon the

beholder. The grandstands, as well as the riders and the horses, are only colored abstractions from reality. If one were to study a small section of the canvas by itself, so that one would see not the whole thing but only a fraction of the colored web—one would not be able to tell what the spots represented, they would appear wholly without meaning. But viewed as a whole,

100. ÉDOUARD MANET
Horse-Race at Longchamps.

through the relations of the values and the color-spot outlines to each other, there is created the complete illusion of a sea of people, ceaselessly surging back and forth. At the moment, to be sure, nothing in particular can be recognized, but we are left with the conviction that if we were but to step closer the spots would immediately change back into hats, parasols, horses, etc.

With all this, however, we have so far only spoken about the relation of impressionistic painting to Nature. More important is its relation to art, and especially to that problem of form and composition which never came to rest throughout the entire nineteenth century.

The achievement of Millet—the replacement of the conventional formulas of composition by the suggestively chosen sector from Nature—was the presupposition without which the impressionistic solution of the compositional problem would be unthinkable. The borrowing from a picture of the school of Raphael, which Manet did once perpetrate in composing the famous triad group in his "Déjeuner sur l'herbe"[2] remains an exception. For so soon as the new painting had renounced on principle all plastic tangibleness and exact drawing in the older sense, all the old conventions, which were destined only for an art plastically oriented and based upon accurate design, were bound to become of no importance to it, to fail of all effect. Added to that was the fact that the old designs brought an element of repose into the picture, but the new art sought to secure at any price the impression of motion. Impressionism demanded a form that was capable of suggesting the momentary, the accidental, the instantaneously changeable.

Just at this decisive moment, the provocation to an entirely new pictorial grammar and syntax came from the Japanese, who of course were likewise bent on representing the temporary, the evanescent, the transitory in their colored block-prints and paintings, but whose ancient tradition put at their disposal a surface rhythm of which European art had no conception. The first decisive impression of East Asiatic art was received by the Parisians at the world's fair of 1867.

[2] As Dr. Gustav Pauli, the director of the Hamburg Kunsthalle, has proven in his article, "*Rafael und Manet*," in the *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, p. 58 (Leipzig, 1908), the main group of the "Déjeuner" is taken line for line from M. A. Raimondi's large engraving, "The Judgment of Paris" (B. 245), which in turn goes back to a drawing by Raphael. This proof is important because of the fact that up to the time of Pauli's article Manet's picture had been exclusively related to Giorgione's *fête champêtre* in the Louvre.

Artists found in the Japanese confirmation of their own color-brightness and their own planiformity. The finest light-effects were attuned to each other in these colored block-prints without any gaudiness. But more than the color, which they would doubtless have been able to hit upon themselves, they felt the effect of those peculiar compositions, likewise proceeding from the accidental patch of Nature, of the distribution of the values over the surface of the picture and within the picture-frame. How rich and electrifying was the arrangement of these instantaneous views, how the accidents of disposition within the frame supported the impression of momentariness. All rounding off, all balance in the European sense was lacking, yet everything blended into harmony as by its own power. A ship's bow, perhaps, a branch thrust forward from one side into the empty space. In some corner or other perched a bird. With a few written characters the equilibrium would be effortlessly restored. Or, a head would rise up strikingly from the lower corner of the frame. It looked exactly as if the rest of the body would emerge in another moment. But the indefinable formal instinct of the artist had nevertheless managed to impart to this quite accidental phenomenon an impression of inevitableness, so that not the least displacement of weight in the picture could be undertaken without destroying the entire effect.

It was Edgar Degas who, with particular delicacy of feeling, succeeded in adapting the rhythmical possibilities of this East Asiatic surface-structure to the requirements of modern European art. (101, 102.)

But the problem of form was only partly solved by the graphic division of the surface. Hand in hand with

this must go the organization of the color of the picture. The palette of the older painters had embraced relatively few tones. Through the observations of the open-air painters, hundreds of new shades of color had been revealed to the eye. But since all these shades ranged

101. EDGAR DEGAS
Portrait of Vicomte Lapic on the Place de la Concorde, 1874, Paris.

within the scale of brightness, that is, within a very restricted field, there was imminent the great danger that the hundredfold decomposed and dissected tonal differences would finally coalesce into a joyless gray; such difficulties had never existed for the old painting, which commanded the full range of the palette from white to black. How then was the purity of color to be preserved?

Paul Signac met the danger with a new technic. (103.) He did not mix his paints on the canvas, but let the fusion take place in the eye of the beholder. To secure a violet, for instance, he does not mix red and blue

on the brush, but places the two fundamental colors in little separate dots side by side, so that each one preserves in this way its full radiance and purity. For the

102. EDGAR DEGAS
La Chansonette, 1875, lithograph.

beholder who looks at the picture from some distance the two basic colors blend in the eye, and he sees violet. Even before Signac, Renoir had recognized that another æsthetic advantage was afforded by this spotty style.

The visible brush-stroke enlivens the surface of the picture, gives it structure, and causes the surface to vibrate. Hence the illusion that issues from his pictures, that the atmosphere is quivering with heat. (104.)

103. PAUL SIGNAC
Pennoned Sailboats.

The intensive preoccupation with the problem of pure, maximally light-filled color ultimately led to the result that the entire picture surface was conventionalized into a color-pattern, in which the unmixed, bril-

104. AUGUSTE RENOIR

Chestnut-Trees in Bloom.

liant primitive colors stand side by side as more or less geometrically shaped brush-dots, quite like the translucent glass cubes of those Byzantine mosaics which the colorism of Venice had once taken as its starting-point. As an example of this style of the so-called *Pointillistes*, I call attention to the harbor picture of Paul Signac (103), in which the single brush-strokes have become regular triangles and squares.

This spectacle—that of Impressionism, in the last stage of its fully developed coloristic ability, seeming to return to achievements which primitive art had already possessed—is so much the more exciting that, as is of course well known, only two decades later the school of Expressionism did actually and publicly announce its adherence to mediæval primitivism. Is this the beginning? Perhaps it was the beginning. But the real moment for such a complete conversion had not yet been reached in the day of the *Pointillistes;* for the time being that one task that the Renaissance had set, and for which the art of the Middle Ages could offer no help, still persisted: the final optical revelation of Nature. For the mediæval mosaics were remote from Nature, while modern painting was still on the track of the subtlest naturalistic achievements. But it was precisely the latter—I think for instance of the problem of how the most delicate and fleeting movement of the atmospheric light is to be held fast in the painting—that fell into neglect because of the formal interests of the Neo-Impressionists. In Signac's harbor picture, to be sure, the air quivers in the highest, clearest tones, but in the reticular, as it were crystallized, mosaic of the surface-pattern all movement is completely congealed.

It was Vincent van Gogh who then showed how

one could retain the principle of color-dissection and still not lose the breath of life. When he paints a group

105. VINCENT VAN GOGH
Cypresses, *ca.* 1890.

of cypresses, for example, the brushwork organizes the surface of the painting with just as much regularity as in any picture of the *Pointillistes*, but this brushwork is no

longer rigid, it has been set in motion. (105.) Starting with the motif of a cypress branch stirred by the breeze, he depicts everything else in the picture with the same swaying brush-strokes. The ornamentalism of the Gothic woodcut line seems to have suddenly revived to create the living, suggestive rhythm. Little tongues of blue, green, and yellow flame permeate the picture and form a pattern that seems to be instinct with constant motion. We see and feel there something that we do indeed know in Nature, but which heretofore we had not thought possible in a picture: the suggestion of a movement of quite a different type from what Manet was able to give—not the captured image on the retina, but the life-impulse itself. A real rhythm seems to have gone over into the picture, so that we feel the wind soughing through the trees.

That is the beginning of something new. Impressionism has given way to Expressionism.

III

In the tendencies of Post-Impressionism just now emphasized, a universal desire is unmistakably revealed, a desire to combine by a new synthesis the visual forms of reality, dismembered by the subtlest analysis, and to exalt into a style that which had hitherto been more or less only the collection of materials; indispensable preparation for a style, but not the style itself. It will always remain the undeniable service of Manet and his circle to have brought mankind into a wholly new relation to visibility. But after those long analytic efforts, the synthesis which they had not been able to give was surely bound to come. So, too, the astounding discov-

eries which had been made in the field of natural science and physics could obviously only acquire a higher significance if it should finally prove possible, on the basis of their many single results, to attain to a new understanding, to a new interpretation of existence and the universe.

What Degas had achieved was a conversion of the new visibility into wonderful patterns. The synthesis which he had in part attained was of purely æsthetic character. But in the hands of *Pointillisme*, the world had finally been pulverized to atoms. A new interpretation of the world from within, the meaning of phenomena and of life, was found by none of them; and probably none of them had sought it.

Those who did seek and find it were two in number. The one a Frenchman, who spent his life in the most modest and unromantic fashion, almost without incident: Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). The other a Dutchman, who led a life full of the most violent concussions and catastrophes; a martyr to his calling, eternally outcast and despised, driven hither and yon like a mangy cur, until he finally put an end to his own life in a madhouse: Vincent van Gogh (1853–90).

The common feature in the art of these two contemporaries was that to them painting was not the imitation of existing phenomena, but the spiritual interpretation of existence. This goal they pursued with no other means than those which were peculiar to their art, painting. But it was precisely these peculiarities to which art had first to be directed by these men. For in the last analysis even Impressionism has been unable to free itself from the Renaissance conception that color and line possessed the sole possibility of reproducing the

phenomena of Nature. Gothic art had known that art can do more than that, that it does not yield to music in its ability, by means of rhythm and sweep of line, by the use of color-accords, to carry the soul of man out and beyond the confines of Nature. When Cézanne and van Gogh rediscovered these possibilities in art at the same time, they opened up all at once a wholly new field of operation for art. Goethe's statement that art is called art precisely because it is not Nature applies to the art of these two painters in a special sense, though each reached the goal by a wholly different route.

As the world-view of the Latin and Gothic races is embodied by Michelangelo and Dürer, side by side, so the same thing happened again in Cézanne and van Gogh. The former is a typical representative of the Latin ideal, of the ideal of Raphael and Poussin: the most perfect mastery of the world as a self-sufficient entity. Not all-inspiring motion, but all-organizing orderliness is the goal toward which Cézanne advances with his almost mathematical precision of form. Van Gogh, on the other hand, is the representative of the opposite party. He is the Goth, the Northlander. The form which comes to Cézanne almost without effort is a problem for him; he struggles for the shaping of his ideas. To him, as a true Germanic type, it was unspeakably difficult to advance from the shapeless to the finished shape. But what fascinates him in the shaping process is to find the convincing expression for the inner life in Nature, the flux and action of it. As Dürer, Altdorfer, and Rembrandt had wished, so he too would fain create a world-picture whose symbol is endless Becoming, not Being. He himself as he creates is seized with

that agitation which he apprehends by listening to procreative, eternally parturient Nature.

It is in this essential point of their artistic confession of faith that the painting of Cézanne and van Gogh has met with the liveliest criticism. This is perfectly easy to understand. Too new was the idea that art, which had produced nothing but Nature-imitation for almost four hundred years, should suddenly presume to bring forth something else besides straightforward imitations. And yet poetry, for example, had long since reached that same stage.

Why should we not concede to the painter rights which have been willingly allowed the poet? When Goethe in a celebrated poem describes the uncanny and expectant mood in Nature:

> "The oak in misty garments towered
> As giants among pygmies rise,
> Where darkness from the thicket glowered
> With hundred thousand peering eyes . . . ,"

every one in our day will admit that this gigantic hyperbole of a landscape at night-time responds most wonderfully to that which the poet wishes to awaken in the imagination of his reader with his very first lines, namely the excited mood of a youth who is riding by night to his distant sweetheart. And we should call that man a perfect fool who would say in criticism that according to rational judgment an oak-tree cannot wear garments, still less misty garments; furthermore that the oak is not a giant, and that a giant can scarcely be imagined as towering; and finally that darkness has no eyes, to say nothing of the hundred thousand eyes with which the poet makes it peer through the thicket. We

allow the poet the right to reinterpret Nature in an imaginative way and to lift it to a higher sphere. But if a painter ventures to make of a tree something else than a model for instruction in botany, then every one considers himself justified in the most unsparing criticism.

But it is nothing more than the poet's point of view which finds expression in Cézanne's dictum: "We must learn to reduce Nature to the simplest geometrical forms, to those of the cone, the cylinder, and the cube." As a genuine Frenchman he wishes in this way to restore to art the highest attainable formal simplicity; he points to the primitive symbols of the physical world. Van Gogh aims at a very different goal, it is true. But what is awakened in his soul when he walks in the midst of Nature is also a set of symbols, it is not the imitation of Nature. Whoever has read the letters of van Gogh to his brother Theo will not have forgotten in them the poetic freedom with which, it may be in the description of a seascape, he composes out of colors and color-tones a picture that goes very far afield from the objective natural phenomenon, but that hammers into our consciousness with unexampled intensity the symbolical, supernatural features of the phenomenon:

"I went walking one night along a forsaken shore; that was not glad, but also not sad, that was beautiful.

"The deep blue of the sky was flecked with clouds of still deeper blue than the blue behind them; some of quite pronounced cobalt, others of a purer blue than the blue brightness of the milky way. In the blue firmament the stars sparkled brightly, greenish-yellow, white, pink, of purer diamond hue than the most precious stones among us: opals, lapis, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires.

"The tide went far out. The dune was violet-blue and fox-red, and yet pale with bushes.

"On the dune the bushes were quite violet-blue."

106. VINCENT VAN GOGH
Starry Night and Cypresses, *ca.* 1889.

The inexorable repetition of one color in a definite rhythmical intensification, the blue of the starry night that recurs again and again in countless gradations,—this is what he also tried to incorporate in his painting "Starry Night and Cypresses." (106.) Only something

is added in the picture, the movement, the flow of that color. The ceaseless, uniform throb of the "Starry Night" finds its counterpart in the flooding curves of color. The road streams along in the light like a river,

107. PAUL CÉZANNE
Country Road, *ca.* 1880, Hamburg, T. Behrens collection.

the cypresses flare up like flames, and the stars and the sky circle together in endless spiral revolutions. In the face of such a picture, we can understand why the works of van Gogh have been called painted music.

When we look back at works of the Impressionists, who were also wont to paint roads with trees, starry nights, sunny days, did they even attempt by a similar summary of the phenomenon to produce a higher con-

ception, a synthesis? Renoir's and Monet's landscapes are the last word in decomposition. All solidity seems crushed to atoms in them. Van Gogh, also, split up the phenomenon into dots, but these dots were made the units of a higher rhythm.

In Cézanne's syntheses the problem of motion is not touched. But a picture like his "Country Road" (Hamburg, Behrens collection) (107) affects us beside the vague haze of the Impressionists like a sudden revelation of solidity and clarity. Only the most essential things—road, garden-walls, groups of trees—are singled out and embraced in an infinitely simple optical formula. Cézanne proceeded just as boldly in the simplification and geometrification of the natural phenomenon as did van Gogh in the mutation of the phenomenon into flowing linear rhythms. "*La maison du pendu*", by Cézanne (108) and "*Ferme près d'Auvers*" (109) by van Gogh do not differ with respect to the task set by Nature. In both cases: a house by the edge of the woods. But what becomes a geometric involution of almost childishly simple surfaces and lines in the conception of Cézanne is seen by van Gogh in the optical formula of an autumn storm. A gust of lines sweeps through wheat-fields and tree-tops; it even seizes upon the house-roof. The lower line of the roof is kept in quiet horizontalness, but from here the linear movement begins to swell, both upward and downward at once, into a mighty crescendo. The wheat-field waves below and the tree-tops flame above. In the clouds the maximum of swelling vertical oscillation is attained. The picture is constructed like the development-passage of a symphony.

Portraiture was always the weakest phase of Impressionism. Naturally. For if one is allowed to record

of a human face only a few vague retinal impressions, and if besides all spiritual expression has been abjured on principle, then the deepest purpose of the portrait—to give the imprint of the outer and inner personality—

108. PAUL CÉZANNE
La Maison du Pendu, *ca.* 1885, Paris, Vollard collection.

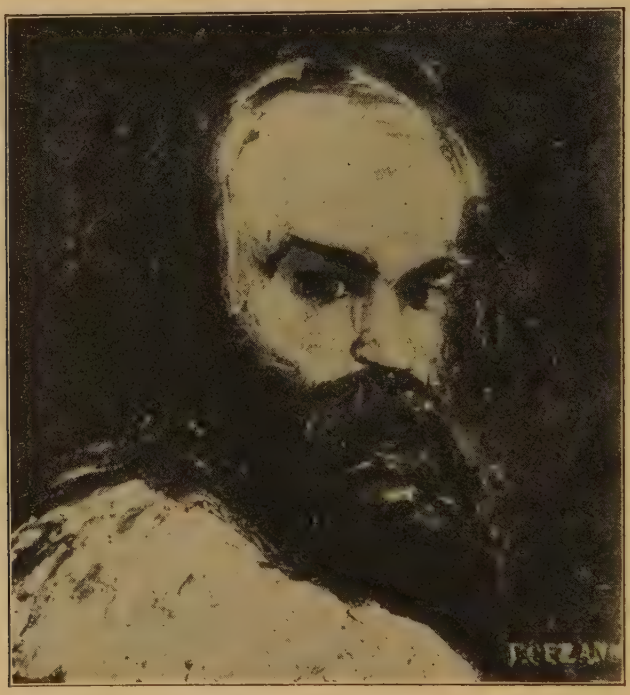
cannot be realized at all. The portraits of the Impressionists are often astonishingly decorative, but that is all they are. Cézanne's portraits from his impressionistic period share this weakness of Impressionism, as do those of van Gogh from the same epoch. But then come works like that "Self-Portrait" of Cézanne (110), in which the color-planes seem to collide with each other angularly, like marble surfaces flattened off with the

chisel. The head, gigantic in relation to the cramped frame, seems to leap out suddenly at you like a beast of prey. The individual features, the resemblances, are no greater than in any portrait by Renoir. But something

109. VINCENT VAN GOGH
Ferme près d'Auvers, 1890.

super-personal speaks from this picture which grips us more than the most accurate reproduction of Nature could ever do—something of the quality of Michelangelo's "Day," which lies heavily on the tomb of the Medici prince, and which also "resembles" no one. One should compare with this picture the "Portrait of Dr. Gachet" by van Gogh. (111.) The difference and the similarity between them is equally illuminating. The one depicted is the specialist in mental diseases, in

whose institution van Gogh committed suicide soon after he had painted the picture. As might be expected, the portrait also turns into a movement-problem for



110. PAUL CÉZANNE
Self-portrait.

van Gogh. In a gnarled, agitatedly twisted rhythm the outline flows around the figure of the man. The stream of all the brush-strokes that model the form follows the same direction and has the same rhythm. One is reminded of certain woodcuts of Dürer, or drawings of Altdorfer, in short, of Gothic abstractions. The difference is only that these lines of van Gogh have the

nature of color, and that this color has something very particular to say to us. It is an imperturbably superior blue that resounds through this whole picture: some-

111. VINCENT VAN GOGH
Portrait of Dr. Gachet, 1890, Frankfort, Städel Gallery.

thing of the superior personality of the physician is in it.

It would signify a complete misunderstanding of Cézanne if we were to think that in his mathematical clarity he had not also wished at the same time to give the deeper secrets, the interpretations of Nature. He always understood how to reveal that which lay as

meaning behind the object—hidden from the eye of the common mortal, but present none the less. This will be felt and admitted only by one who has seen many of his works. These final things are hard to analyze; in

112. PAUL CÉZANNE
Still Life with the Clock, *ca.* 1870, Budapest, Private collection.

few words it cannot be done at all. But I am convinced that even his still-lifes try to give far more, and are actually able to give far more, than merely a clear disposition and representation of a few dead objects. One might call his "Still Life with the Clock" (112) a reflection upon the tyranny and the regularity of time. For time stands the symbol of the right angle, which recurs everywhere in the picture. The form of the clock, which with its hourly chime holds our whole existence spellbound in eternal obedience to its hours, strikes the

key-note with its rigid rectangularity. As straight as an arrow stands the vase near by, and the frame of the mirror continues to sound the same note. The folds of the table-cloth lay themselves in rigid angles. The sea-shell with its Baroque spirals, and the napkin crumpled up in similar fashion make the dominance of the universal compulsion, by contrast with their irregular outlines, all the more unmistakable and insistent. No actual "clock that ever moves alike" could put life into fetters more ruthlessly than this concord of right angles does it. How empty, after all, was the impressionistic art that saw in the still-life only the decoratively beautiful description of dead objects, and that took objects as at best an excuse for evolving color-harmonies from them. Under Cézanne's hand even the dead objects become the revealers of deep mysteries that one might say had been slumbering within them.

There are also still-lifes by van Gogh. Flower-pieces, in which the colors glow and the swaying lines proclaim the welling of the sap, the inner life of the plants. Nevertheless, for van Gogh life itself in its highest forms, landscape and man, was always the more important task. That is the place where he too brings forth the mysteries that lurk behind the object.

Van Gogh's sermon upon inexorable tyranny, upon the law and its antithesis to a life of freedom is "The Prison Yard." (113.) Inexorably high walls meet at obtuse angles. In this disconsolate, unlighted cave the monotonous sound of tramping, blunted prisoners, who move in an endless undivided circle. Not the description of the captives, not the portrayal of their pitiable state is what creates the effect. Sound makes music. It is the form of the entire picture, the monotonous rhythm of in-

113. VINCENT VAN GOGH
Prison Yard, 1887, Moscow, Morosoff collection.

cessant repetition. The outlines resemble each other like the days of these prisoners, like the one sound of their footsteps, which re-echo from the walls. Alliteration would be used by the poet to produce this uni-

formity of sound, and a metre in whose monotony lurks hopelessness—as Carl Hauptmann the poet has done, for instance, in his prose poem "*Lesseps*":[3]

Shrieking the silence.
The ghastly gaping.
The burd'ning void.
The time without future.
The masonry of the prison-yard is ten metres high.
The glances of the moth-gray sinners rebound from the gloomy bricks like balls that children toss interminably against the selfsame wall.
The beauty of earth, the eyes' delight, no longer lifts to the stars, nor laves the wide world, but is reduced to the dullest gray-in-gray.
The rounds of the convicted form a lengthy course.
Tramp hopelessly.
Unrelieved.
Leading nowhere.
As the pendulum ticks and tocks, dissecting time,
Casting piece on piece into abysses.
Lost forever.

Just so, in monotonous phrases that keep repeating what never does end—variations, as it were, on one and the same groping rhythm which steadily hammers into the hearts of the spectators only the pitilessness of it all—so speaks van Gogh. A poet in forms of visibility. As in the hands of Cézanne, whose creations are comparable to sonnets in visual form, so in van Gogh's hands painting has become something that it had been once before, previous to the Renaissance, in the Middle Ages. Expression of supersensual values. Absolute painting set free from the tyranny of pure Nature-imitation. To be sure, the presupposition of modern painting remains what painting has achieved and what civilization has

[3]Carl Hauptmann, *Lesseps, ein legendarisches Porträet* (Hannover, Paul Staegemann, 1919).

acquired in the five centuries since the Middle Ages. It is no violent reversion to the state of childlike primitiveness, but it is an advance beyond the boundaries of art, to the point where art is once more permitted to make revelations, because it is called upon to fulfil that high mission.

At one time painting had been the handmaid of literature. Then she became the handmaid of the eye. Now she is mistress of the eye and yet at the same time poetess as well as musician, without however needing to borrow her thoughts from poetry or her melodies from music. Sustained only by those means that are peculiar to her own essence, art brings humanity into communion with life.

INDEX

Numbers in bold-faced type refer to illustrations. Names in italics, if unquoted, refer to book-titles.

Alberti, L. B., *Trattato della pittura*, 14, 25, 52 *f.*
Altdorfer, 145, 161, 169–170, 175–6, 198, 304, 312; "The Forest Dweller," drawing, **169,** 146; "St. George Fighting the Dragon," **176,** 175; engravings, 161; landscapes, 161.
Andrea del Pozzo, 235–6; "St. Ignatius Carried into Paradise," **237,** 235–6.
Antonella da Messina, 63, 146.
"Apollo Belvedere," statue, 4.
Ariosto, 30, 31.
Avenarius, 277.

Baldung, Hans, 160–2, 164–6, 175, 198; "Witches," woodcut, **165,** 164; "Repose in Egypt," **173,** 172–3.
Balzac, 208.
Barbizon school, 256, 263–4, 290.
Baroque, 135, 178–184, 186–7, 189–192, 194, 197, 218, 221, 223, 226–7, 234, 246–7, 249, 255–6, 262, 272, 285.
Bellini, G., 51, 61, 63, 148, 160.
Benedetto da Maiano, "Virgin and Child," marble, **86,** 85.
Benevoli, Orazio, 183.
Bernini, 70, 78, 181, 185, 234; "St. Theresa," 185; Colonnade before St. Peter's church, 234.
Boccaccio, 10.
Boiardo, 30–1.
Boniface VIII, pope, 11.
Borromini, 179.
Bosch van Aeken, 197.
Botticelli, 27, 30, 51, 98; "Adoration of the Magi," 27; "The Virtues," 98.
Bouchardon, 78.
Bramante, 11, 70; Sta. Maria della Grazie, Milan, **127.**
Brunellesco, 10, 35, 123, 125; San Lorenzo, Florence, **122,** 123, 125.
Burckhardt, Jakob, *Civilization of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*, 2.
Byron, 260, 261, 276.

Calderón, 186.
Caravaggio, 196; "Peter Denies the Lord," etching, **195.**
Carpaccio, 51.
Carracci, 178, 186.
Castagno, Andrea del, "Portraits of Famous Men and Women," **17,** 16–18.
Cellini, Benvenuto, *Autobiography*, 10 *f.*
Cervantes, 186.
Cézanne, 196–7, 303–317; "Country Road," **308,** 309; "*La Maison du Pendu*," **310,** 309; "Self-portrait," **312,** 310 *f.*; "Still Life with the Clock," **314,** 314.
Chardin, 248.
Charlemagne, 7.
Cicero, 2, 3.
Cimá da Conegliano, 51.
Cimabue, 35.
Cologne Cathedral, interior, **124.**
Cologne, Church of the Apostles, **128.**
Columbus, 6, 48.
Condivi, 76.
Copernicus, 7.
Corday, Charlotte, 252.
Corot, 54, 263 *f.*; "Steep Road," **265,** 264; "Castle of Beaune la Rolande," 264.
Correggio, 46, 49, 160, 181; "Assumption of the Virgin," **47,** 48 *ff.*
Courbet, 280, 285, 292.
Cranach, 159 *ff.*, 172, 198; "Repose in Egypt," **171,** 172; woodcuts, 159.
Cubism, 197.

Dalcroze, Jacques, 93.
Dante, *Divina Commedia*, 9, 10.
Daubigny, 263, 290.
Daumier, 270, 280; "The Washwoman," **269,** 270.
David, J. L., 245, 249 *f.*, 250, 252, 254 *ff.*, 266, 273, 292; "The Oath of the Horatii," **250,** 249 *f.*; "Marat Murdered," **251,** 252.

Degas, E., 281, 285, 295, 303; "Portrait of Vicomte Lapic on the Place de la Concorde," **296;** "*La Chansonette*," lithograph, **297.**
Delacroix, 78, 208, 255 *f.*, 258–262, 273, 280 *f.*, 283; "The Barge of Don Juan," **259,** 260; "Liberty on the Barricades," **262,** 261 *f.*
Descartes, 184, 189, 233.
Diaz, N., 263.
Diderot, 240, 247 *ff.*
Domenichino, 178, 186.
Donatello, 37, 59; High altar at Padua, 37.
Duncan, Isadora, 93.
Dupré, 263.
Dürer, 120, 146–164, 170, 172, 174 *f.*, 197 *f.*, 244, 304, 312; "Four Riders of the Apocalypse," woodcut, **149,** 150, 164; "Flight into Egypt," woodcut, **153,** 152; "*Melancolia*," engraving, **157,** 154, 156; "St. Jerome in his Cell," engraving, **155,** 152, 154; "Large Passion," woodcut series, 150, 159; "Small Passion," woodcut series, 159; "Passion," engraved series, 159; "Apocalypse," woodcut series, 152, 159, 163; "Patch of Lawn," water-color, 150; "Stag-Beetle," water-color, 150; "Life of Mary," woodcut series, 152, 159; "Meeting of Mary and Elizabeth," woodcut, 152; "Feast of the Rosary," 159; "All Saints," 159; "Four Apostles," 159.

Einstein, 7.
Enea Silvio, 12.
Etruscan, 76.
Expressionism, 192, 197 *f.*, 201, 228, 279, 300.
Eyck, Jan van, 166, 188.

Fayum, death-heads of, 15.
Florence, St. Lorenzo, interior, **122,** 123; Palazzo vecchio, **129,** 129 *f.*; Campanile, 129; Sta. Maria Novella, 121.
Fragonard, 238, 249 *f.*; "Bathing Women," 249.
Francis of Assisi, 7.
Freiburg Cathedral, 129.

Galileo, 7.
Galli, Jacopo, 66, 70.
Gauguin, 198.
Géricault, 255–260, 262, 292; "Horse Race at Epsom," **257,** 256 *f.*, 292; "The Raft of the Medusa," **258,** 258 *ff.*
Gerstenberg, K., *Deutsche Sondergotik*, 135.
Ghiberti, L., 10, 16, 37.
Ghirlandajo, 28, 51; "Zachariah and the Angel," **29,** 28.
Giorgione, 51, 61, 63, 294; "*Fête Champêtre*," 54, 294; "*Tempesta*," 54.
Giotto, 16, 35, 59, 274; "Judas Betrays Christ," **39,** 38 *ff.*
Goethe, 76, 202, 275 *f.*, 304 *f.*
Gogh, van, 300–317; "Cypresses," **301,** 301 *f.*; "Starry Night and Cypresses," **307,** 307 *f.*; "*Ferme près d'Auvers*," **311,** 309; "Portrait of Dr. Gachet," **313,** 311–13; "Prison Yard," **316,** 315 *ff.*
Gothic, 5, 15, 16, 33, 120–6, 129, 134–6, 138, 140–7, 152, 159 *f.*, 162, 164, 166–8, 174 *f.*, 177, 189, 197 *f.*, 201, 302, 304, 312; altar, **137, 139,** 135–9, 160; cathedral, 33, 38, 121–6, 140 *f.*, 143, 177; sculpture, **142,** 141–3.
Goya, 236, 285 *f.*, 288; "*Desastres de la Guerra*," 236; "*Caprichos*," 236; "Shooting of the Rebels," **286,** 288.
Gozzoli, "Procession of the Magi," 26 *f.*; "Shame of Noah," **81,** 80.
Granacci, 68.
Greco, El., 57, 78.
Gregory the Great, 7.
Greuze, 240–2, 249 *f.*; "The Village Bride," **241,** 240 *f.*, 250; "The Milkmaid," 240; "The Widow and Her Pastor," 242, 250; "Septimius Severus and His Son," 241 *f.*
Grünewald, 138, 160, 172, 175; "Isenheim Altar," 138.
Guardi, F., 61, 238.
Guericke, O., 184.
Gustavus Adolphus, 183, 189.

Hals, F., 178, 187.
Harvey, 7.
Hauptmann, Carl, *Lesseps*, 317.
Hegel, 276.
Herculaneum, 3.
Hermas, visions of, 106.
Hildesheim, city hall of, **132.**
Hobbes, Thomas, 183.
Holbein, H., Jr., 146, 159 *ff.*; Illustrations to the Old Testament, 159; "Dance of Death," 159; "Portrait of Gisze," **204,** 205.
Holbein, H., Sr., 167.
"Homer-landscapes," in the Vatican, 33.

Ibsen, 277.
Impressionism, 61, 78, 192–4, 196 *f.*,

205–7, 238, 256 *f.*, 277–9, 281–294, 300, 303, 308–310.
Ingres, 254–6, 262, 266, 285, 292; "The Vow of Louis XIII," **253,** 254.

Jacobello del Fiore, 51.
Japanese art, 294 *f.*
Johannes Palæologus, 27.
Josse van Ghent, 99, 146.
Julius II, pope, 11, 65, 68–71, 75 *f.*

Kant, 7, 276.

Laokoön group, 4.
Latini, Brunetto, 12.
Leibniz, 233 *f.*
Leonardo da Vinci, 7 *f.*, 13, 27, 59, 67 *f.*, 83 *f.*, 89, 167, 174, 217, 283; "Last Supper," 27, 218; *Treatise on Painting*, 60, 79 *f.*, 84 *f.*
Limburg an der Lahn, cathedral, **131,** 132.
Lippi, Filippino, "The Delphic Sibyl," **99.**
Lippi, Filippo, 30, 51.
Lorenzo di Credi, 59.
Louis XIV, 182, 184, 231, 244, 275.
Loyola, St. Ignatius of, 184 *f.*
Luther, Martin, 183.

Mach, Ernst, 277, 281.
Maillol, 78.
Malatesta, Sigismondo, 25.
Manet, 54, 193, 238, 255, 279, 281, 285–8, 292–4, 302; "Shooting of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico," **287,** 289; "*La Rue de Berne*," **289,** 290; "Horse Race at Longchamps," **293,** 292; "*Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*," 294.
Mantegna, 24, 30, 42, 44, 49, 63, 148, 150; "Family of Ludovico Gonzaga," **19,** 18–22; "Ceiling of Bridal Chamber at Mantua," **43,** 49, 235.
Marat, 252.
"Mary of the Annunciation," anonymous sculpture, **142.**
Masaccio, "The Tribute Money," **40.**
Medici, Cosimo dei, 27, 65.
Medici, Ippolito dei, 14.
Melozzo da Forlì, 42, 49, 98, 146, 235; Vault in Loreto Cathedral, **44,** 43; Vault of Santi Apostoli, **45,** 46, 49.
Memling, 166.
Michelangelo, 11, 53, 56–8, 63–121, 154–7, 162, 181, 235, 246, 255, 304; "The Shame of Noah," **82,** 80 *f.*; "St. Matthew," **91,** 90; "David," **89,** 66 *f.*, 89; "Madonna of Bruges," **86,** 85–9; "Medici Madonna," **87,** 86–8; "Slave," **91,** 73, 91–2; "Nudes" from Sistine Chapel ceiling, **96, 97;** "Prophets and Sibyls," 98–111; "The Delphic Sibyl," **101,** 100, 104, 109, 246; "The Persian Sibyl," **102,** 104, 156 *f.*; "The Cumæan Sibyl," **103,** 104, 106; "The Libyan Sibyl," **105,** 106, 109; "The Prophet Isaiah," **107,** 109; "The Prophet Jonah," **108,** 111; "The Prophet Jeremiah," **110,** 111, 154 *f.*; "The Prophet Ezekiel," 94; "Tomb of Giuliano dei Medici," **113,** 114–8; "Tomb of Lorenzo dei Medici," **114,** 114–8; "Prigionieri," **117,** 73, 118–9; "Drunken Bacchus," 66; "Sleeping Cupid," 65; "*Pietà*," 66; Tomb of Julius, 68–73; "Moses," 73; Medici Chapel, 73 *f.*, 112–18; "Division of Light and Darkness," **95,** 83, 94, 98; Sistine Chapel ceiling, 56, 74, 93–112; "Last Judgment," 56, 75; "The Flood," 82; "Expulsion from Paradise," 83; "Creation of Adam," 83; "Creation of Eve," 83; "Apollo," 89; Frescoes in Capella Paolina, 56; "Day," 311.
Milan, Santa Maria della Grazie, **127,** 128.
Millet, 248, 263, 265–8, 270, 280 *f.*, 294; "The Gleaners," **267,** 266 *f.*; "Angelus," **268,** 268 *f.*
Monet, 279, 281, 285, 292, 309; "Summer Day," **291,** 292.
Munch, E., 198.

Napier, John, 184.
Nepos, Cornelius, 18.
Newton, 184, 233.
"Niobe and Her Children," ancient sculpture, 4.

Parma, cathedral of, 127–8.
Perugino, 59.
Petrarch, 48.
Picasso, 198.
Piero dei Franceschi, "Sigismondo Malatesta Kneeling before St. Sigismund," **26,** 25 *f.*
Pisano, G., 59.
Pissarro, 285, 291.
Pius II, pope, *see* Enea Silvio.
Plato, 100.
Pleydenwurf, W., 147.
Pliny, 3.
Plutarch, 2, 8.

Pollaiuolo, 98; "The Virtues," 98.
Pompeii, 3.
Poussin, 135, 178, 185, 242, 266, 304.
Primaticcio, 135.
Puget, 78.

Quatremère de Quincy, 179.

Raimondi, "Judgment of Paris," 294.
Raphael, 11, 22, 25, 30, 37, 51, 160, 167 *f.*, 174, 203, 235, 244 *f.*, 254 *f.*, 273, 294, 304; "The School of Athens," **21, 23,** 22–4, 61 *f.*, 235, 245; "Portrait of Francesco Maria della Rovere," **23,** 23; "Madonna of Foligno," 254; "Sistine Madonna," 136, 254; "*Disputa*," 159.
Rembrandt, 78, 118, 135, 178, 181, 187–230, 242, 246, 255 *f.*, 273, 283, 304; "The Night Watch," **191,** 22, 190 *f.*, 223, 230, 235, 246; "The Golfers," etching, **194,** 193; "Men Bathing," etching, **196;** "Twelfth Night," etching, **199;** "The Three Crosses," etching, **200;** "Portrait of Nicolaes Bruyningh," **205,** 206 *f.*, 246; "Portrait of His Mother," Vienna, **212,** 210–12; "Portrait of Elisabeth de Leeuwen," 211 *f*; "Supper at Emmaus," 1627, **215,** 214, 217 *f.*; "Supper at Emmaus," 1648, **216,** 217 *f.*, 221; "Supper at Emmaus," 1661, **219,** 218; "The Good Samaritan," etching, 1633, **220,** 218, 220–2; "The Good Samaritan," 1648, **222,** 221; "The Thunderstorm," **224;** "Landscape with Three Trees," etching, **225,** 226 *f.*; "Windmill," **226,** 227; "Landscape with Swans," etching, **228,** 227 *f.*; "Self-portrait," **229,** 230; *chiaroscuro*, 188–191, 223, 283.
Reni, 178, 186, 196.
Renoir, 285, 298, 300, 309, 311; "Chestnut-Trees in Bloom," **299.**
Revolution, French, 243–5, 249 *f.*, 252.
Ribera, 185.
Rodin, 78.
Roger van der Weyden, 146.
Rome, "Golden House of Nero," 3.
Rosso, 135.
Rothenburg ob der Tauber, view of, **133.**
Rousseau, J. J., 245.
Rousseau, T., 263.
Rubens, 57, 78, 178, 185, 255, 262, 281; "Lion Hunt," 262.
Ruysdael, 263, 282.

St. Sophia, church of, 38.
Salzburg, cathedral, 182.
San Gallo, 11, 65.
Sarto, Andrea del, 53, 160.
Savonarola, 27.
Schongauer, 147, 152, 161; "Flight into Egypt," **151.**
Seghers, 198.
Seurat, 61.
Shakespeare, 181, 186, 202, 208.
Signac, 61, 296, 300; "Pennoned Sailboats," **298,** 296 *f.*, 300.
Sisley, 285.
Solari, Santini, 182.
Stoss, Veit, Carved altar-piece at Cracow, **137, 139.**
Strindberg, 277.
Suetonius, 8.

Taine, *Philosophie de l'Art*, 202 *f.*, 208.
Terborch, 181.
Theodosius the Great, obelisk of, 33 *f.*
Theresa, St., 184 *f.*
Tiepolo, 61.
Tintoretto, 55, 61, 78, 191, 197, 281.
Titian, 54–7, 61, 63, 78, 136, 160, 181, 204, 283; "*Pietà*," **54, 55,** 61 *f.*; "Assumption of the Virgin," 136.
Toricelli, 184.
"Tree of Jesse," from a carved altar-piece at Kalkar, **144.**

Uccello, 35 *f.*
Ulm cathedral, 129.
Urbino, Duke of, 98.

Vasari, 1, 10, 35.
Velazquez, 57, 78, 178, 187, 191, 196, 283, 285 *f.*; "Surrender of Breda," 191.
Veneziano, Domenico, 36, 53.
Verrocchio, 59.
Villani, Filippo, 2.
Vinci, Leonardo da, *see* Leonardo.
Vitruvius, 3.

Washington, plan of, 277.
Watteau, 247, 250, 274; "Island of Cythera," **248.**
Winckelmann, *History of Ancient Art*, 76.
Woelfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 55, 235; *Barock und Renaissance*, 179.

Zola, E., 5, 6.

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